

THE EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYED.

THE CHAMBERS' PHILOSOPHY REFUTED.

" Ill fares the land—to hastening ills a prey,—
Where *wealth accumulates, and men decay.*"

" If England, with her proper power at home,
Cannot defend her own door from the dog,
Let us be worried ; and our nation lose
The name of hardihood and policy."

" A true labourer earns that he eats ; gets that he wears ; owes no man hate ; envies no man's happiness ; glad of other men's good ; content under his own privations ; and his chief pride is in the modest comforts of his condition."—SHAKESPEARE.

" Hereditary bondsmen ! know ye not,
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow."

BYRON.

TO THE WORKING CLASSES.

My Friends,—I had intended to preface the following dialogue, my Reply to a very iniquitous Tract recently published by the Chambers of Edinburgh, with a conversation between an infant operative, her mother, and her grand-mother. For the present, however, I am compelled, for want of space, to abandon my original intention, and I am sorry for it, because I think I had matter enough to have produced a very interesting dialogue between those three parties. I shall take another opportunity of allowing them to speak for themselves, and, for the present, shall content myself with the defence of your order which will be found in the following pages ; offering, as a substitute for my own preface, the admirable letter of Mr. Duncombe, in which is set forth the means by which the labouring classes may yet be put in the full possession of their rights.

FEARGUS O'CONNOR.

The Albany, Dec. 23, 1844.

DEAR SIR,—I am much pleased if any information that I can afford to the working classes should lead them seriously to reflect upon their true position ; for you may rest assured, that thought in the right direction, and acted upon wisely, is all that the Trades and industrious classes require, to obtain for them not only political emancipation, but some of those practical remedies which the men of Sheffield have so sagaciously adopted ; — I allude

principally to their plan of *restriction*, to which my attention was more immediately directed during the discussions of last session upon the "*Factory*" and "*Masters and Servants*" Bills. If my former note, in which I announced to you the probability of a similar attack upon Labour being made next session, shall have forewarned the Trades and working classes, by stimulating them to such means as through *union* may make their opposition irresistible, I shall consider myself amply repaid. I think we may draw some conclusions as to the tactics likely to be pursued in Parliament by the representatives of wealth, from certain speeches, letters, and publications that have recently appeared, and which leave little doubt in my mind no time should be lost by the working classes to prepare for a bold and vigorous stand. I fear you over-rate my powers of resistance. I am only strong when I represent the *organised* strength of *your* order; and from my limited knowledge of the machinery by which Trades Unions are managed, I cannot venture to give you an opinion that should carry weight with it, upon the subject of an improved organization and consolidation of our various national trades; but, if such an object is required, *I know of no course* (excluded as the working classes are from the Parliamentary franchise) *better calculated to give effect to that object* than that which you suggest, viz., that the *wise and virtuous from all parts of the empire should meet by delegation at a conference in London*, where, co-operating with the metropolitan trades, they shall endeavour to devise such means as shall not only obtain *protection to the sons of toil* from that oppression and persecution of which they have so long and so justly complained, but shall also *tend to disabuse* the public mind of those prejudices, which I regret to see are now so industriously encouraged against every combination but that of capital and of power.

As to the time when this conference should be held, I should recommend about Easter, as by that time all ministerial measures, whether affecting trade, commerce, or labour, either will, or ought *to be*, before the country, and it could not then be said that it was either premature to discuss them, or too late to resist them. As to the contemplated demonstration on the opening of Parliament, I know nothing of it beyond rumour, and what I read in the public prints; but if it is solely intended as a compliment to myself, and a mere parading through the streets, upon the same day as the Queen, without any definite object or possible benefit to the working classes, I beg to say that, as far as I am concerned, I will be no party to it, and no man shall leave his employ, or lose his day's wage, on my account.

I am rejoiced to find that you attach some importance to my intended motion for the repeal of the rate-paying clauses, and I certainly think that petitions, numerous, signed, and presented by the members representing the localities from which they emanate, will have a most beneficial effect, for I have yet to learn why borough electors—men whom I have always found, if not superior, at all events equal in intelligence and education to county electors—should be compelled to pay their taxes by a certain day as a condition of their registration, while the small freeholder, and the servile tenant-at-will of an aristocratic landed proprietor, is exempted from any such condition.

I beg to conclude by assuring you that my untiring and unflinching advocacy of the rights of the industrious classes shall be continued, until, with their assistance, Labour, which is their property, shall be placed upon perfect equality with the property of all other classes in the state. I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your's very faithfully,

THOMAS S. DUNCOMBE.

To Mr. John Drury, Secretary to the Committee
of the Central United Trades of Sheffield.

LABOUR PLEADING ITS OWN CAUSE.

IN A DIALOGUE.

PART I.

Speakers—Mr. James Smith, a factory mill-owner, and Mr. Richard Jackson, a cotton-spinner.

Smith.—I am glad to see you, Mr. Jackson; step in to my house, and let us have a little conversation on the present unhappy differences on the subject of wages. Perhaps I may show you that the ideas entertained respecting employers are not, by any means, just. At all events, let us hear what each has got to say—you on the part of the operative class generally, and I on the part of the mill-owners and others, who are in the habit of giving employment.

Jackson.—Thank you, sir; I am a plain-spoken man, and have no objections to say what I and others think about our condition as workmen: so I very willingly accept your invitation.

Smith.—Now, Mr. Jackson, sit down: and, if you please, begin by telling me exactly what the workmen want.

Jackson.—Why, sir, the great matter is this—our condition is much less comfortable than we think, in justice, it should be. We are poor, and not getting any richer. Few among us can get more than 22s. a week for our labour. The average wage is about 14s. or 15s.; and we do think it a hard case that a man, with a wife and family, should have to live on any sum of that kind, when we see the masters so well off, and they, as one may say, living by our hard and continued labour. What we want is, “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.”

Smith.—The statement apparently is—that the employers give lower wages generally than they ought to give. Is not that the substance of your charge?

Jackson.—Yes; we think you should give at least 25 per cent. more. If a man now gets 20s., he should get 25s., and so on.

Smith.—Very well. Now, be so good as tell me on what ground you rest this demand.

Jackson.—Because you are making large profits, and can afford to pay more than you do. The profits should be more equally divided.

Smith.—Now, I believe, we understand each other. I like your candour; and I think I shall answer you. You claim more wages on the score of your contributing to the production of profits. Let us take my own establishment as an example, and let us suppose you are a workman in it. I wish to know how much you put into the concern.

Jackson.—Me! why, I give you my labour from Monday morning till Saturday night.

Smith.—This labour, then, is your contribution of means. You receive 20s. for the week’s labour; and therefore it is just the same thing as if you were to give me 20s. every week, so that I might lay it out in hiring somebody to do your work.

Jackson.—I think much the same thing.

Smith.—It is then allowed that you contribute to the extent of 20s. weekly to my concern. May I now ask if you think every one should be paid according to the extent of his in-put and risk?

Jackson.—That certainly would be fair.

Smith.—I shall then explain to you what I have put in, and how I have been enabled to do so. The cost of the buildings, the ground, the machinery, and other things required to begin the manufactory, was £80,000; and the money necessary for buying raw material, and giving credit till sales could be effected, and also for paying wages, came to £10,000 more. You understand I did not start till I had 90,000*l.* ready to be laid out and risked on the undertaking. If I had begun with less, the concern would have been unsuccessful. It could not have gone on. To raise this large sum of 90,000*l.* was a very serious matter. My father was a working-man, like yourself. His wages were never above 18*s.* a week. On this sum he brought up his family, for my mother was very economical. I got a little schooling; was taught to read, write, and cipher. At fourteen years of age I was sent into a cotton-factory, where for several years I had no higher wage than 5*s.* a week. I afterwards, by dint of some degree of skill and perseverance, rose to be a spinner, and received 25*s.* a week; but off this I had to pay a boy-assistant 5*s.*; and therefore my real wage was only 20*s.* a week. I was at this employment four years and a half, during which time I saved £30, which I deposited in a bank for security. One day, when I was at work, a party of foreigners visited the factory; they were in want of a few steady and skilful hands to go to St. Petersburg, to work in a factory there. I volunteered for one, and, being chosen, I went to that distant city, which you know is in Russia, and there I received for a time about double my former wages. In three years the overseer died; I was promoted to his situation, and now received as much as £250 yearly. I still made a point of economising my gains; and, on reckoning up, found, that when I was twenty-eight years of age I had saved £700. At the recommendation of a friend I laid out this money on a mercantile speculation—in short, I risked its entire loss. I was successful, and made my £700 as much as £1,000. Again I risked this sum, for it seemed a sure trade; and so on I went for several years, increasing my capital both by profits and savings. When I married, which was not till thirty-five years of age, I had realised one way and another £20,000. I now returned to England, was for several years a partner in a concern where I again risked my earnings, and at the end of fifteen years retired with £90,000. With this large sum I built my present factory, and entered into the hazardous business in which I am now engaged. I ask any man if I did not earn my money by hard industry, by self-denial, by serious risks, by a long course of pains and anxieties? For having done all this, I consider I am entitled yearly—*first*, to an interest on my money equal to what I could have obtained by lending it; *second*, to a profit that will cover any losses which I may incur by bad debts; *third*, to a per-centage to pay the tear and wear of machinery and deterioration of property; and, *fourth*, to a salary for my personal trouble—in other words, my wages; and all this over and above the ordinary expenses of the concern. Let me assure you that nothing is more certain than that, taking the working classes in the entire mass, they get a fair share of the proceeds of the national industry. We may take a few facts. To begin with my own mill. I spent, as I have said, £80,000 on the building and apparatus. Now nearly the whole of this was dispersed in wages to working people. See what a number of men must have been employed in fashioning the raw materials into the house and its machinery—brickmakers, limeburners, coal-miners, waggoners, wood-cutters, sailors, carpenters, builders, slaters, plasterers, glass makers, glaziers, iron-smelters, engineers; and not only these, but the persons who supplied them with food and clothing. In short, if we were to go into a minute calculation, we should probably discover, that out of my £80,000, as much as £75,000 went to the working-classes, the remaining £5,000 going to the

proprietors of the raw materials, and to intermediate dealers. If people would reflect a little on such matters, they would perceive what an enormous share of the cost of almost every article goes to operatives. It is ascertained, by careful calculations, that out of £100 worth of fine scissors, the workman have £96 as wages; of £100 worth of razors, they have £90; of £100 worth of table-knives and forks, they have £65; of £100 worth of fine woollen cloth, they have £60; of £100 worth of linen yarn they have £48; of £100 worth of ordinary earthenware, they have £40; and so on with most articles of manufacture. In the making of needles, pins, trinkets, watches, and other delicate articles in metal, the proportion of wages rises to within a trifle of the price of the article. In the working of collieries the expences are almost entirely resolvable into labour; there being few cases in which the coal-miners receive less than £90 out of every £100 of the current expenditure. I trust it is not necessary to dwell longer on the notion, that working-men do not get their fair share of the proceeds of the labour on which they are engaged. And, as you might imagine that there is some kind of mystery under the term capital, I will explain the meaning of it in very few words. Capital is anything which is of value. It may consist of labour, of houses and lands so far as they are productive, of machinery, manufactured goods, or money. Everything is capital which possesses an exchangeable value, and can be made directly available either to the support of human existence, or to the facilitating of production. Capital or property is a sheer result of labour, if not labour itself; and that it is the accumulated savings of years, say, in some cases, of centuries. He who possesses capital in the form of a large sum of money, for instance, can give employment to others. You know quite well that, before I planted my factory here, there was little work in the town. Now, see how many workmen and their families are supported. I was not, mark you, obliged to come here and set up a factory. I could have gone somewhere else. Then look at the sum which I distribute weekly in wages. I give employment to 100 men, 146 women and girls, and seventy boys—altogether 316 individuals; and the entire sum paid on an average, weekly, for wages, amounts to £290. I say I pay £290 to my work-people weekly in exchange for their labour; surely you must now see that capital is a good thing; good for the working-classes. It is capital which hires and employs them; it is capital which pays their wages; it is capital which keeps them busy when often the market is glutted with goods; it gives them work till better times. And yet there are workmen so short-sighted as to wage war on the very thing which supports them. They attack capital as an enemy. It is their best friend. Now I put it to you, Richard Jackson, as a straightforward man, and answer me, if I, by these risks and obligations, and personal attentions, be not justly entitled to take a vast deal more out of the business than you, who put in only 20s. in the shape of weekly labour?

[So far we have given the points of the dialogue as set forth in the Tract of the Messrs. Chambers, and as this portion of the dialogue may be taken as the terms upon which the parties join issue, the declaration and plea will be somewhat varied from the manner in which they are set out in the original pleadings.]

Jackson.—Now, Mr. Smith, I think I understand you, and we can join issue; you undertaking to defend the rights of capital, and I to defend the rights of labour?

Smith.—No, no, no. You mistake me; the whole bearing of my illustrations have gone to show that capital is the best defender of the rights of labour, while you would place them in antagonism.

Jackson.—If such be your office, you have strangely discharged your

duty to your clients, for, upon re-consideration, I think you must come to the conclusion that the tendency of your observations would go to prove, firstly, that the employed was a mere passive instrument in the hands of the employer; that the capitalist with a family, or without a family at all, underwent all the risks, suffered all the mental torture, and deserved great sympathy for the risks, the endurance, and the mental agonies that he underwent during the process of money making.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, you seem to forget that I have been endeavouring to refute the absurdities of those grievance-mongers who would throw all the odium of the hardships that your class complain of, upon the shoulders of the masters.

Jackson.—Well, I understand you to occupy that position, and I am going to establish the fact.

Smith.—Yes, yes; going to do a thing, and doing a thing, are two very different things. I tell you, you can't establish the fact, unless you doubt the narrative that you have just heard of my life, and unless you believe that there is something magical about me which has conferred peculiar advantages upon one individual above another.

Jackson.—Come, come, one swallow doesn't make a summer. I am talking of a system, and not of a charmed man; and you no more represent that system, than Newton, because he was a great luminary, represented the sun, moon, and stars.

Smith.—Mr. Jackson, I invited you to this discussion because I looked upon you as a straightforward, blunt, honest man, that would discuss the question of labour and capital familiarly with me; drawing your conclusions as to my rights to what I possess from the risks, the hardships and the mental agonies I endured; while you would mystify the whole subject by plunging into the gulph of "system." There, there, Mr. Jackson, in that consists the great error of your class; instead of receiving instruction and admonition from your best, indeed your only friends, you allow your minds to be contaminated, and your better judgments to be warped, by the interested misrepresentations of hired, restless, and designing demagogues.

Jackson.—Upon that subject we will have a word by-and-bye; and now, as you wish to make yourself the representative of a system, I will see if I cannot illustrate its viciousness from your own lips and from your own position.

Smith (wriggling).—Pooh, pooh, Mr. Jackson, it's impossible I tell you. It is this flying in the face of the masters with your political economy, rights of labour, and trades' combinations to defend them, that has, more than any other circumstance, led to that rankling feeling in the minds of the masters of which your class complains.

Jackson.—If I mistake, correct me; but, as I didn't interrupt you, give me leave to state my own case.

Smith.—Well, well, go on, but be brief, for really these mysterious calculations about demand and supply, and new doctrines about the rights of labour, and all that stuff, are so complicated that they puzzle me.

Jackson.—The puzzle has been of your own making; to solve it, is my intention.

Smith.—Well, well, do go on.

Jackson.—Well, then, I take you from your departure for Russia, up to which period you have saved the sum of £30. Your division of time from the period when you had attained your fourteenth year till you had arrived at the age of twenty-eight, is so very abstruse and enigmatical, being divided into periods of "several years" working for 5s. a week; the "number of years" that you were earning 20s. a week; the "three years" that you worked for "double wages" in Russia before the overseer died and you got his place,

and from that event till your twenty-eighth year, when you took stock and found yourself to be worth £700; these several periods, I say, are so jumbled together that I can establish no scale of your saving up to that time.

Smith.—What have you to do with that? that's my business. I had £700—and I saved it by my earnings, and I suppose I had a right to do so?

Jackson.—A perfect right, Mr. Smith; and I am very glad, for your sake, that the Russian spinner could afford, in a comparatively untaxed country, to give you £2 a week, double the wage that you can give me, and out of which I have to pay very heavy taxes.

Smith.—Pooh, pooh, nonsense; haven't I to pay the income-tax?—taxes for my house, for my carriage and horses, and servants; taxes for paving, cleansing, tithes, poor-rates, church-rates; taxes for my wine, my tea, and my sugar—in short, for every thing I eat and every thing I drink?

Jackson.—No, sir; you make a profit upon them. I pay them, or help to pay them, and I'll show you how, presently. However, to resume: when you were 35 years of age you had amassed the sum of £20,000, which, you tell us, you had put together one way or another; and as it was all made in Russia, I don't stop to inquire how, but shall come to the consideration as to how you augmented it in fifteen years to £90,000, during which time you trafficked in English labour.

Smith.—“Traffic!” what do you call “traffic?” I exchanged it for labour. Traffic is a sordid word: a term ever in the mouth of those who would degrade the high-minded employer to the rank of the grovelling low-minded huckster.

Jackson.—Well, Mr. Smith, we won't quarrel about terms. You bartered it for English labour.

Smith.—Say exchanged it, Mr. Jackson. Its a much less offensive term.

Jackson.—Well, you exchanged it, Mr. Smith.

Smith.—Now, come, we are getting into good humour again. Go on with your narrative.

Jackson.—Well, you embarked your £20,000 in manufacturing, and in fifteen years, during which time you supported your family and lived, you realised the sum of £90,000; and now, Mr. Smith, if you please, a word about a very important branch of political economy—DISTRIBUTION.

Smith.—What do you mean? Your “EQUAL DISTRIBUTION,” I suppose. Do you want to distribute my property for me?

Jackson.—No, sir; it is not “EQUAL DISTRIBUTION;” nor do I want to distribute your property. It is equitable distribution; and I want the laws of my country—which should be “EQUALLY” protective of the rights of all—equitably to distribute the property of all.

Smith.—Equal, equitable, equally, equitably—what's the difference? You want to rob me?

Jackson.—I do not, sir; but I desire that you should not rob me. I apply the term *equal* to the laws, and *equitable* to the distribution of property. Equal, to the law's protection of your equitable share which you claim under the head, interest for your money, guarantee against bad debts, wear and tear of machinery, and wages for your labour; and also to my equitable share of whatever the surplus may be, after guaranteeing those several amounts to you.

Smith.—Well, but what have you to do with it more than receiving your pound a week? What do you know of the surplus—wasn't it my own?

Jackson.—As Sir Robert Peel said in discussing the appropriation clause, let us have the surplus before we talk of its application. And now I shall proceed to show you where I find that surplus, and what I find it to be. You invested £20,000 at the age of thirty-five years, and when you were fifty, you had increased it to £90,000. You tell us that the investment of

£90,000 led to the employment of 316 hands. If, then, the employment of £90,000 capital led to the employment of 316 hands, the employment of the £20,000 would lead to the employment of seventy hands; that is, if there was another partner with you who invested an equal amount of capital you would employ 140 hands; if three partners, with equal shares, about 210 hands; if four partners, with equal shares, about 280 hands—leaving the surplus of thirty-six pair of hands unemployed against the £10,000, the amount by which your accumulated capital exceeded the £80,000 employed by you, and three other partners who invested £20,000 each. Upon your £20,000 you realised £70,000 in fifteen years—and had then £90,000; and you very fairly demand your profit upon the £20,000 in the shape of interest, compensation for bad debts, wear and tear, and wages for labour. Now this is fair: indeed I may call it equitable distribution, and I will proceed to my calculation. I allow four per cent. for the interest of capital; two per cent. for bad debts; two per cent. for wear and tear; two per cent. for wages: that is, in the lump, ten per cent., or £2,000 per annum. As you and your family lived out of £20,000 during the fifteen years, I will place it against the compound interest that you might have realised; and as you say you lived savingly, I will allow you two per cent. in lieu of the compound interest, taking your total profits upon your £20,000 at twelve per cent; to which add the support and education of your whole family—and for fifteen years, at twelve per cent. upon your £20,000, you would have realised the sum of £36,000, which, added to your original capital of £20,000 would make £56,000, leaving the surplus of £34,000, or within a fraction of £500 each for the seventy hands employed in working your £20,000 of capital. Now, sir, to the sub-division of the £34,000 surplus, after allowing you twelve per cent. upon your capital, and all the expense of education and the support of your family, I apply the term “equitable distribution;” and the term “equal protection,” I apply to those laws which should guarantee to me my £500 with equal security as to you your £36,000, or twelve per cent. upon your capital of £20,000 for fifteen years: whereas the law has enabled you to take the whole of the twenty-four per cent. made upon the £20,000 by labour, and has thrown many, if not all, the seventy hands engaged in making it, into the cold bastille, or compelled them to begin anew to make another £20,000 into another retiring salary of £90,000 for another master, while they have added fifteen years to their lives. And now, sir, to satisfy you upon all points, allow me to contrast your position at the end of fifteen years, with that of an individual of any other class commencing business with £20,000. If I allow you compound interest at four per cent. it would have taken many years more than the fifteen, even to have doubled your capital; that is, without charging you anything for living, or the education of your family, you would not have made your £20,000 capital into anything like £40,000 in the fifteen years. Had you invested your £20,000 in the purchase of land, allowing you four per cent., you could not have supported your family and augmented your capital as you have done in the trade of cotton spinning; while, although as a landlord, you might have left your social duties undischarged, the law would have compelled you to bear a certain amount of taxation which you could not possibly have shoved upon the shoulders of others. Had you commenced the trade of shop-keeper, and retired in fifteen years, after having educated and supported your family, with an addition of £36,000 to your original capital of £20,000, you would have been a phenomenon in that line—in fact, an exception; while, as a cotton-spinner, your case is the rule, instead of an exception. In short, sir, the laws have been made for the government, management, and arrangement of a

social state, over which the present process of steam production has passed, as it were, by a hop, step, and jump; and what I and my class—who, together with the shopkeepers, have been the great sufferers—require is, the enactment of such a code of laws as shall legally protect and equitably distribute the surplus property of the country; after having awarded to money capital, speculation, risk, and industry, that fair amount of protection which labour, if equally protected, would neither deny, murmur at, nor withhold. Poverty, sir, is the rule of my class—it is the exception with yours; and, however you may try, by hired advocacy and purchased philosophy, to convince me that reliance is better placed in the money capitalists than in labour capitalists, you will fail, until you first succeed in convincing me that the wolf is the best protector of the lamb, the cat of the mouse, or the kite of the lark. For, if you do not devour our bodies as well as the produce of our labour, it is because your mechanical arrangements are not yet complete as a substitute for our labour upon the one hand, and because the old school of sympathisers recognise in us that value, as consumers, which gives an increased value to their landed property. To the law then, and not to sympathy or charity, we look for protection.

Smith.—The law!—what have I to do with the law? I made the money. The capital was mine, and I paid every man his lawful wages.

Jackson.—I grant it, sir; you have nothing to do with the law, but you did not pay every man his lawful wages, nor was the capital yours.

Smith.—The capital not mine! whose was it, then? This is more of your political economy and equal distribution.

Jackson.—Hold, hold, Mr. Smith; my assertion has nothing to do with political economy, nor has it any reference to distribution; what I am now stating is a fact admitted by yourself. In your endeavour to shew the patronising qualities of the capitalists, you have made some valuable admissions. You have stated, that out of a £100 expended in the manufacture of fine scissors, £96 is the value of the labour, and £4 the capital invested; that in every £100 worth of razors the labour amounts to £90 and the capital to £10; and so on, until you come to the manufacture of needles, trinkets, &c., in the manufacture of which you admit nearly the whole investment to be labour. In soft wares, you tell me that in the article of fine woollen cloth the proportions are £60 for labour and £40 for capital, and as your trade of cotton spinning appears to have been very profitable, I think we may assign to the respective capitals employed in the manufacture about the same relative proportions by which you measure their application to the fine woollen cloth.

Smith.—Respective capitals! What do you mean? Have I not told you that all the capital was mine?

Jackson.—You have told me no such thing, sir. You have told me that everything that bore an exchangeable value was capital; and you particularly instanced labour; and if we can agree upon your calculation as to the respective amounts of money-capital and labour-capital, expended in the manufacture of £100 worth of linen yarns,—and that description most nearly represents the fabric produced by your money and my labour,—you will see how nicely and how truly the result is produced; £34,000 of the £70,000 accumulated by you, belongs to the hands that made it, and £36,000 to the parties that employed them. Your calculation is, that £100 worth of linen yarns consist of £48 in labour and £52 in capital. Now, sir, you will find that, as nearly as we can balance, the £36,000 that I assign to you represents the fifty-two per cent. of your capital, and the £34,000 represents the forty-eight per cent. of labour;—that is, £34,000 is to £36,000 almost fractionally what forty-eight is to fifty-two.

Smith.—O, I don't understand your figures and your fractions.

Jackson.—Perhaps, sir, you can only bring your mind to bear upon interest for your capital, compensation for bad debts, allowance for wear and tear of your machinery, amount of salary for overlooking, and an indefinite surplus,—in which is included my labour,—for mental anxiety. Now, Mr. Smith, I think I have shown you, according to all the laws of nature and of justice, that while you ought to be satisfied with adding £36,000 to your capital in fifteen years, that all the hands that realised that capital were, as well as yourself, entitled to a retiring salary.

Smith.—Well, they may retire if they like.

Jackson.—Now, sir, you talk nonsense, and mock us in our poverty. You call your labour, honourable labour; and tell us that it is augmented by distraction of mind, hard industry, self-denial, serious risks, and a long course of pains and anxieties. I admit it all, sir; but sufferings of bodily torture and the pangs of mental endurance are qualified and soothed by the cheering reflection that each passing hour of suffering hastens that happy period when, if not impelled by the sordid desire to heap more riches to your already extravagant store, you may quit the busy bustle of life, and thus release yourself at will from all your sufferings; while those who commenced at an equal age with yourself, and who assisted in augmenting your treasure, are at the age of fifty,—when you have become independent of the world—deteriorated in strength, and their labour reduced in value, compelled to merge into what is called the “surplus population,” and are heartlessly told at that age to search for a new habitation and strange associates in a foreign clime; that the land at home which yields forth its abundance is too small for their sustenance; and that the machinery and new inventions which have displaced their labour are the pride of the country whose system confers all the proceeds upon the privileged, and all anguish, care, and sorrow on the unprotected.

Smith.—Unprotected! what do you mean? You can protect your family as well as I can protect mine. What protection have mine beyond what my own industry gave them?

Jackson.—Not so fast, Mr. Smith. Recollect we are starting from a point; and that point is when you embarked £20,000 in manufacturing speculations, and when you employed seventy hands to turn it into a marketable commodity; and recollect, that while your capital, worth 52 per cent., was protected by a vote, that my labour, worth 48 per cent., was wholly unprotected.

Smith.—Now there you are in error. I will show you that your class has nothing to complain of on that score. There were five out of the seventy, or one in fourteen, of the hands that worked for me, who were voters for the borough of Devil's Dust—while I, representing the whole of the capital, had but one vote.

Jackson.—What gave them the vote?

Smith.—A £10 house, to be sure.

Jackson.—And whose were the £10 houses?

Smith.—Why mine, to be sure; I built them.

Jackson.—Then they were capital, Mr. Smith—because they possessed an exchangeable value: and they were of an amount that ought to be represented!

Smith.—Yes, certainly.

Jackson.—Well, Mr. Smith, by a loose calculation just made in my head, I find that in the fifteen years that you employed seventy men, you made a profit of £990 by the labour of each, or £66 per year profit upon each man's labour: a profit, the one-sixth of which, if in a house, instead of being in labour, would have entitled the labourer to a vote. But as you

have in your opening speech included very many topics, I shall withhold my reply on this important subject for another interview, when I undertake to prove the injustice of that system which enables you and your family to appropriate to yourselves what belongs to me and my family.

Smith.—I have nothing to do with your family—I pay you your wages, and look to my own.

Jackson.—I have a family as well as you: they are dear to me as yours are to you. I have laboured from youth upwards to support them. I have wrought with you for the last fifteen years, and to-morrow, what must be my anguish, my sorrow, aye, and my vengeance too, when I see my pallid wife, and stunted, not half-clad children—emaciated, without the blush of youth in their faces, or the suppleness of youth in their limbs—without the gay and childish look in their sunken eyes—what, I say, must be my reflection and theirs, when, to-morrow, they and I look upon the fresh blood that flows through your children's veins—the lively and playful glances that beam in their eyes—the rich dresses in which your family are decked; and when they see your splendid equipage, with pampered horses and well-fed menials, ready to convey your family to the princely mansion that you have purchased with their young blood, and amassed by their sweat—

Smith.—Hold, hold, Jackson—you do, you do, you do me injustice. You have roused a feeling that never touched my heart before. Is that your wife, and are those your children?

Jackson (embracing his wife and drawing the children to him).—Yes: these are mine, and the workhouse now must be their portion; and to-morrow, as you move along from our village, lolling in your stately equipage, and carried by your prancing horses, you will be cheered on your way by the reflection that your traces are made of infants' sinews, and your carriage wheels are oiled with the blood of the impoverished babes that now surround you; and when you enter that splendid mansion that you have purchased by my sweat and theirs—when you are about to offer up your prayers to God in the morning when you arise—when you ask that Omnipotent Being who created you and me, your children and mine, to “give you your daily bread,” think of those who are without bread.

Smith.—Jackson, there's the error. It is a fault of the landed monopolists, and not of the Almighty, that you have to complain. It is they who rob you. Join with your masters for the repeal of those unjust laws which put an additional price on your bread, that monopolists and idlers may live in luxury.

Jackson.—Sir, I have exhibited my case, and the poverty of my family; and yet, while you deny that laws have anything to do with the poverty of the poor, you would now make me infer that all our sufferings are a consequence of one bad law: a law—the only law—of which your order complains, and, strange to say, under its operation you have become wealthy and we have become poor.

Smith.—Poor! I tell you that you have the same opportunities that I had, and instead of stuffing your head with politics, if you had minded your business as I have done, you would have been as successful as I have been.

Jackson.—Then, sir, if I had been as successful as you have been, unless the poor can all become money capitalists,—my success would have been but a substitute for another's failure—or another cog in that artificial wheel which grinds the faces of the poor.

Smith.—Jackson, again I tell you that we are your greatest friends, and you are your own greatest enemies. Give over politics, and those crude and silly notions about laws that your head appears to be stuffed with; and henceforth devote your time to forwarding those great improvements which

are now everywhere in process of completion for the benefit of the working classes. The establishment of baths, improvement societies, the opening of pleasure grounds, the advantages of emigration, and the benefits of better ventilation, are the all-important considerations that should occupy the attention of the working classes; while the mystery of law-making should be left to those who have received an education to fit them for the task, and whose independence, in a pecuniary point of view, places them above suspicion on the one hand, and makes them independent of party interests and party strife on the other.

Jackson.—Mr. Smith, if I had my £500 that is now in your pocket, and which rightfully belongs to me, I should require neither charity, gratuity, nor sympathy. If, then, my family or myself required cold baths, I could procure them out of my own resources; if they were ignorant or uneducated, I should then stand justly chargeable with a neglect of parental duties; if they were naked, as you now behold them, and if I dissipated the means of giving them comfortable clothing, the finger of scorn would be pointed at me, as an unfaithful father, a bad man, and an unworthy member of society. But now, sir, their every want to which you would reconcile them by bits of charity and sympathy, are consequences of oppression and misrule, and not characteristics of my nature. **BATHS and PLEASURE GROUNDS, sir!**—ah, ah, ab, what mockery! Immerse that perished withering child, from whose young veins you have extracted the hot life's blood, in a cold bath! and exhibit that crippled child with twisted limb in your pleasure grounds, as a mockery to your order for the injury they have inflicted upon my child! **BATHS, sir!**—behold their rags. The tender mother who bore them, reared them, and loves them, has enough to do to pin their rags together once a day, without imposing a double hardship on her. Emigrate, sir! Have you not learned that commandment from the God above us, which enjoins us to "honour our father and our mother, that our days may be long in the land which the Lord our God has given us." Come, my children! come, my wife—I would willingly have spared you the knowledge of those facts, which known, must but increase your vengeance. Go, sir, to that lordly retirement that you have purchased by the sweat and blood of those children; and should one pang of remorse enter your callous breast for the injury that you have done, when at your comfortable meal you take up the morning papers and read, under the head of "Melaucholy catastrophe," that in desperation, and rather than see his family perish before his eyes for want, or rather than be inmates of three several wards in a cold bastille, Riebard Jackson, unable to bear up against the accumulated load of poverty that pressed upon him, in a fit of phrenzy destroyed three of his children, and then put an end to himself!—then, sir, remember, that **YOU** were his murderer, because you had in your pocket his £500, the possession of which would have made him a happy man, an indulgent parent, and a valued unit of the social family.

Smith.—Hold, Jackson, hold; you surely will not do as you say, or think that I have led you to the rash act. Will you meet me here again to-morrow, when I shall have thought over those many points that I confess you have so strongly urged upon my consideration?

Jackson.—Yes, sir, I have no objection; another day's suffering will not break the heart that has been accustomed to so many years of sorrow. Farewell, sir; we meet again to-morrow, when I trust I shall be in a temper to discuss your remaining propositions; and in the interim, should my minute calculations have puzzled you, hear the fact in memory, that during the fifteen years that you have employed your capital or exchanged it for labour, that I have made you and your family, in point of profit, equal

to the seventy men and their families, and have given you £2,000 additional into the bargain. Remember, sir, that if your family consists of five, that we and our families consisted of 350; and while you complain of the decline and desolation that affects the shopkeeping classes to reconcile us to our more forlorn condition, do not lose sight of the fact that the poverty of the shopkeepers is also a consequence of your unjust competition, which is only made profitable by a reduction of wages. Your cousin, Mr. Smith, the grocer, asked me but yesterday how it was, that while trade was so good his business was on the decline? and should he ask you the question, sir, as you boast of so much candour, tell him that his receipts would have been greater if the seventy men who have worked for you had received their weekly proportion of the £34,000, which you have invested in the purchase of an estate. As you have invited me to another interview and further discussion, and as you have introduced a great variety of topics in your narrative, upon all of which you say you would wish to be convinced; and as you are an educated man, and I am no scholar; and as you have laid great stress on the value of machinery, perhaps you would condescend to hear what old Robin, the shoemaker, who has lived ninety years in the village, has to say upon the subject.

Smith.—Robin, the shoemaker! what has the shoemaker to do with machinery? Machinery doesn't make shoes.

Jackson.—That's just what Robin says, sir. But, he says, in his own way, that "since them there flying devils, made of wood and steel, set about doing the work of men, that he believes that folk sin' then is born without feet;" and poor as I am, I can't but laugh sometimes when I hear old Robin question the shopkeepers somehow after this fashion:—"Ah, weel, Maister Smith, did that 'ae fine cast-iron man coome on the Saturday neet, when he got the wage, for a pound of sugar or tea, or owt of that sort?" and then he goes to Sparerib, the butcher, and says to him, "Weel, Mr. Sparerib, and what sort of a customer is that there stranger as has come to visit Maister Smith, the cotton-spinner; and how is his digestion?" And so he takes his rounds, and goes to Twist the hosier and there he tells him how he supposes, that, as the stranger works without stockings, the poor folk that are obliged to work with him are obliged to do without stockings too. Will you see Robin, sir?

Smith.—Yes, Jackson, if you let me bring Mr. Quill, the lawyer, with me, as two to one is not fair.

Jackson.—With pleasure, sir,—as many as you please. It's just what we want to get your class to hear what poor folks have to say, for the newspapers, and all the writers, will only publish one side of the question. Good morning, sir.

Smith.—Good morning, Jackson. Farewell; you are a clever fellow, and I begin to think, now that I am about to enter into another sphere, that my class have evinced a sound judgment, if not a just one, in refusing to hear the cause of the people advocated by themselves. And now you have solved a riddle that puzzled me. I was always astonished why so shrewd a man as Sir Robert Peel should have refused to hear the people explain their own grievances at the bar of the House of Commons.

Jackson.—Ah, but as shrewd as he is, he was a fool then, for it only increased that inflammable feeling which he'll have to hear louder in the long run. Folks get angry, when they won't be even listened to.

Smith.—Farewell, Jackson! Farewell. We meet again to-morrow, before I start for "Shoddy" Hall.

PART II.

[*Mr. Smith and Mr. Jacob Quill receive Old Robin and Richard Jackson, in a private room in the "Stranger's Home" public house.*]

Mr. Smith.—Well, Jackson, you see I am not unmindful of my appointment. I am glad to see you; how is Robin to-day?

Robin.—Thankye, thankye, Maister Smith, I be's a jogging on for ninety years come Martinmas. I have nothing to complain of, on health account, thank God.

Quill.—Well Robin, and how do do?

Robin.—Ay, dear life, Maister Jacob Quill, I am not so strong as when I and thy father used to go to Suunday school four score years sin', long enough before thou wert born or thought of.

Quill.—Hem, bem. Robin, I'm told that you and our good friend Jackson here, and some other of the town-folk, have taken it into your heads to think that machinery is a very injurious thing to the working classes.

Robin.—E'cod then, Maister Quill, that's a notion I have had this many a year.

Quill.—Well now, Robin, my time is precious; but always anxious to confer any service in my power on the working classes, I have consented, at the request of Mr. Smith, to forego the most pressing and important engagements for the purpose of destroying this hobgoblin that you have got in your head about machinery; and, as I know that all the young chaps look to your opinions on the subject, I think it a duty that I owe to you, to myself, to society at large, and especially to my misguided townsmen, to convey to them, through you, my notions on this all important subject, at any sacrifice to myself. So now, Robin, let us begin.

Robin.—Well, Mr Quill, that's just what I want. You may be sure though, that though my time is not as valuable as thine, ninety years isn't fond of long-winded speeches. So, go on: we be's here to hear what thou hast to say in favour of thy client.

Smith.—Nay, nay, Robin, you are Mr. Quill's client. He has come here to plead your cause.

Robin.—E'cod, I thank him. Lawyers don't oft plead for poor folk for nowt. So I'll hear what Maister Quill has to say for me.

Smith.—Well, come, shan't we have a drop of something to cheer us before we begin? What will you have, Mr. Quill?

Mr. Quill.—Well, a glass of brandy and water—"cold without."

Smith.—Robin, what will you take?

Robin.—I'll have nowt, thankye, Mr. Smith.

Quill.—O, come, Robin, I hear you're fond of a glass of ale.

Robin.—Aye, I could take my glass after a day's work, when I could brew it myself; but I have no fancy for that there stuff they froth with "fettingling." It always gives me the gripes.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, what will you have?

Jackson.—Thankye, sir, I'm a teetotaler.

Quill.—O, damn yonr teetotalism—that's another of the crotchets that you working men have got into your heads.

Robin.—Now, then, Maister Quill, as they say in the law courts, "just open thy case."

Quill.—Well now, Robin, what I say is this.—Though I am not as old a man as you, I can well recollect the state of society in the village of Devil's Dust before the introduction of machinery; and every man who has had eyes to see, and brains to understand, the rapid progress that this village has made, even witbin the last fifteen years, when Provi-

dence put it into the head of Mr. Smith to settle amongst us, must, if he is a candid man, admit that we have progressed rapidly in wealth and civilization; and you, as the father of a family, must have partaken, to a considerable extent, of the general advantage. For instance; things that were wholly out of your reach when you were a working man, are now articles in common use with the working classes generally. The produce of machinery, from the facility of producing so much more goods than could be produced by manual labour, has so increased the supply of that description of produce as to compel the masters who vest their capital in those descriptions of fabrics, actually to be obliged, as it were, to invite the purchaser to take them at any price. And then, again, see the extent to which this much-reviled machinery gives employment to the whole family of the working classes. Surely, Robin, you remember the time,—for I am younger than you, and I remember the time myself—when all those new streets behind Mr. Smith's, and Mr. Twist's, and Mr. Cobb's, and Mr. Grab's, and Mr. Screw's, and Mr. Bait's, and Mr. Thimble's, and Mr. Rigg's, were all open fields, and children used to be there of eight, nine, ten, eleven, aye, and twelve years of age, idling their time at play, at cricket, and trap, and marbles, and ball, and hop-step-and-jump, and running, and leap-frog, and doing all sorts of mischief from morning till night: now, all those, even to the very youngest, are employed in the mills, instead of passing their time in idleness and viciousness, and wickedness, that brings them to the gallows at last.

Robin.—E'eod, stop; not so fast, maister. We hadn't a lawyer in those days nearer than York, twenty-three miles from Devil's Dust; so folk wasn't very wicked: now we have twenty-seven in Devil's Dust alone.

Quill.—Well, well, Robin, that has nothing to do with it; if you have twenty-seven in Devil's Dust they spend their money there.

Robin.—Nay, they spend other folks'. We could manage to do without them.

Quill.—Well, come, Robin, we won't dispute that point: but to return to machinery. Had you a Town-ball sixty years ago? Had you a Mechanics' Institute? Had you three banks? Had you a railway coming up to your very door to convey your produce to all parts of the world? Had you such hospitals, infirmaries, and cemeteries as you can boast of now? Had you such a refuge as stands on yonder hill, the union workhouse, where the unemployed may live at ease, aye, and in luxury too—I say in luxury, notwithstanding all the foul-mouthed denunciation of demagogues? Has not the occupant of every £10 house a vote? and is not that within the reach of every man of good character and common industry? Have you not shops with fronts fine enough to dazzle the passenger, especially when lit up at night? Don't they look like fairy palaces? Have you not now fourteen churches built by all denominations of Christians, instead of the one miserable little parish church that stands prominently conspicuous as a memento of our former poverty, when compared with the splendour of those grand edifices which mark the progress of civilisation? Have you not all these things—and are they not one and all the result of machinery? Then again, see the amount of capital that it annually circulates among the working classes. See the number of foreigners that frequent this formerly almost unknown, out-of-the-way village; and think, that after bestowing all this grandeur and these improvements at home, it enables us to export the surplus to all the countries of the world: and further, that if our mad rulers would untrammel it of those restrictive laws which limit its produce, and thereby necessarily limits the employment of the working classes, it would be an unalloyed, unmixed, and undeniable—aye, I repeat it, *undeniable* source of profit to all classes of the community, and to the working classes in particu-

lar. Those restrictive laws, Robin, once removed, would open every pore of industry ; would create an amount of competition among the masters that would lead to the employment of thousands and tens of thousands of unemployed hands that are now competitors against their own class, or obliged to be supported on the industry of those at work ; and thus could we make the whole population one united, happy family, all units in the social circle, instead of, as now, setting labourer against master and master against labourer. Robin, what was England before the introduction of machinery, and what is she now ? Not to draw our conclusion from this one isolated spot, let us cast a glance at the great national improvements that have taken place. See, then, the great improvement in navigation, whereby you apply the steam-engine,—the mainspring, we may call it, of machinery,—to the transmission of the produce of British industry to the remotest parts of the habitable globe. See the substitution of gas for tallow ; and the printing machine for the old dull system of printing by hand. See the stupendous railways, annihilating both “time and space”—passing, as it were, through the bowels of the earth, levelling mountains, and flying with an astounding exactitude over a mere line, as it were, running between two terrible precipices, conveying a moving village by this mainspring, as I before called it ;—this moving power of machinery—the triumphant steam engine, that never tires.

Robin.—Has’t done, or nearly done, Maister Quill ? for, c’cod, thou’st spun such a long yarn that I can scarce keep the tale in my old head.

Quill.—Done, Robin ! No ; it is a theme upon which I could expatiate for hours, days, weeks, aye, months, together. What man of common feeling can reflect on this national boon without feeling a meritorious desire to explain it to those who are too dull to comprehend its advantages ? and surely a sensible man like you, Robin—the very mind and organ of the working classes (I say it without flattery)—cannot be indifferent to the vast advantages that machinery has conferred upon the working classes. At all events, *you*, and several other different trades, such as Carpenters, Builders, Ironmongers, Potters, Cutlers, Cabinet-makers, and so forth, can have nothing to complain of, as it hasn’t interfered with your labour : and yet, strange to say, those very parties are most vehement declaimers against the present system, and loudly complain of their present poverty.

Robin.—Well, now, Mr. Quill, when so many folks complain, as they say, “there’s never smoke without fire ;” so there can’t be so much complaint without cause.

Smith.—Well but, stop, Robin : don’t interrupt Mr. Quill : he hasn’t finished ; and I am sure if you came here to learn, you must be equally delighted as myself—and I think I may say as our friend Jackson appears to be—with the lucid, clear, candid, and I will add unanswerable, exposition of our friend. I thought that you came to hear, and to be convinced ; and surely it would be a waste of your time and mine to attempt to urge anything against the philosophical and philanthropic reasoning of our friend.

Robin.—Maister Smith, Maister Quill knows that if one side had all the talk, there would be but little call for judges or juries ; and, as I am an old man, I have got in my head now as much as I can think on for a bit. So, with your leave, I’ll just have a word.

Quill.—Well, come, let us hear what Robin has to say.

Smith.—Well, if you wish it, with all my heart. I merely interposed for Robin’s own benefit, and for the benefit of his class. Now, go on, Robin ; but be brief, for its twenty minutes after eleven now, and I have ordered my carriage to be at the door at one.

Robin.—Well, Maister Quill, I se’ed a blind man many a year sin’ a taking notes, as they call it, of what folks said, by knotting a piece of

string; and I have tled down what thou hast said on this here; and, e'cod, thou seest it full. Now, I'll begin where thou began; and all thou'st done, Maister Quill, is just to show me all the changes that have taken place sin' machinery was introduced; and thou hast put them all down to machinery. Why, Maister Quill, I reads a bit of history now and then, and I reads of the time when the poor was "serfs;" and I read of the revolutions; and I read of the kind of houses that folks and kings lived in, and of our rude and uncivilised manners and customs; and I have lived to see what the historians call the improvements in the arts and sciences, and in living, and in civilisation, and these going on year after year, before the world ever thought of the steam-engine. I se'ed them, and noticed them, aye, and felt them myself too, Maister Quill; but now thou would put down all the improvements that have taken place within the last fifty years, and twenty-nine of them in peace too, to machinery. Now, Maister Quill, what I say is this: in them there old times, when folks felt that they were born with fingers to do summut for one another, we hadn't so many classes; and whenever any improvement took place, aye, even at the top, in the palace, another would take place in the poor man's house. I remember the times that thou call'st the wicked times, when young folk used to run about the fields; when faither and the older children used to do the work, and when the mother used to tend all, and had all under her own eye; if a call come for one of the young ones to bear a hand, he was always ready and willing; and now, Maister Quill, I'll tell ycu the change I've seen in my time, and all has been brought about by them there flying devils doing the work of young and old. I remember when there was—say a population of about 2000 in this parish. There would be about twelve maisters, big and little, and about 200 Hand-Loom Weavers. Then there were Shoemakers, and all the other trades. There was no cotton-mill always running by steam; there was no banker in the parish; there wasn't a lawyer, Maister Quill, nearer than York; there was no Town-hall then, no Mechanics' Institute, no hospital, no infirmary, no union bastile. No, nor no police, Maister Quill, except Bumble, the headle, and me, and the like of me, that all had an interest in the peace of the parish. Then, Maister Quill, Bumble's staff carried authority with it, and he never had to use it; for he knew every man in the parish, and knew where to find him in his own house if the justice wanted him. At that time there was only the little parish church, and old parson Flower, to preach in it, and the Catholic chapel, that the Rev. Mr. Faithful used to attend. We hadn't the fourteen churches then, Maister Quill.

Mr. Smith.—Robin, what has all this to do with machinery? Machinery didn't build the churches.

Robin.—'Ecod! it did though—and made the parsons too.

Smith.—Well, Robin, what is it you are driving at? Politics, I am afraid, Robin.

Robin.—Noa, Maister Smith, nor at religion neither. We can talk of churches and parsons now-a-days without thinking of religion. I am an old man; you must give me my own way; Maister Quill has drawn a picture of what Devil's Dust was, and what it is now, and he says machinery made all the difference; and I am going to shew him that all them there things, aye, 'ecod, every one of them, that he calls "improvements" is all t'other way for the working classes.

Smith.—Ah! ah! ah!

Quill.—He! he! he!

Robin.—Well, wait a bit. I am saying, that, at that time, there were the two churches, and two religions; and Master Flower and Master Faithful would go down and preach: and they'd meet after in the street and

shake hands, and all folks would see them and think that howsoever they differed in the pulpit, they met like friends outside, and that other folk should do the same. But now 'ecod we have the Wesleyans, the Unitarians, the Methodists, the New Connection, the Old Connection, the Baptists, the Ana-Baptists, the Ranters, the Puseyites, and the Infidels. 'Ecod, its no wonder that folks' brains should be bothered when there's fourteen different parsons all at work together, every one telling folk that there's only one road to heaven and that's their own.

Quill.—Come, come, Robin, let us not enter into questions of religion; those are subjects between man and his Maker; and, no doubt, those fourteen pious men are, one and all, in quest of truth.

Robin.—In quest of the devil! They are in quest of the brass, Maister Quill.

Smith.—Robin, my time is too precious to listen to such infidelity. If you have anything to say to the point, I am ready to hear you.

Robin.—Then come to the point. Maister Quill says as how machinery has been a blessing to the poor; and Maister Jackson axed me here to shew what effect it had upon them there trades that it didn't do the work of yet.

Smith.—Now, that's it—that's coming to the point.

Robin.—Well then, now let us see what was the condition of the people of Devil's Dust before all those blessings, and what it is now. 'Ecod, but you have roused me, Maister Smith. In those days I was a Shoemaker, and I had a wife and five children; and all the affairs of the parish were so nicely balanced that I could calculate within a trifle of what the Saturday neet would bring. There was no "fluctuations" then to give us a good week, a bad week, and no week at all. My eldest son Robin was put to the loom, and the wife and children, when they were growing, would card and spin, and wind, and reel, and get bobbins ready, and all that; and I'd work at my trade, and all at home. Well, if Robin's Maister got a fresh order, or wanted a piece finishing in time, he'd come to the lad and say, "Well, Robin, how does't get on, lad; can'st finish thy piece by Saturday neet?" and if Robin would say "Noa, Maister Fairplay, not without a few extra hours;" then Maister Fairplay would tap him on the shoulder, and, giving him five shillings, would say, "Well, come, Robin, there's *extra* for thee;" and Robin would finish the piece, and whistle and sing all the after hours, all the family lending a cheerful hand, because the five shillings went into mother's purse on Saturday neet. And when Robin took the work home on Saturday neet, there was no *balings*, nor *fines*, nor damning his eyes, but a glass of home-brewed ale, and a shake o' the hands, and a "Thankee, Robin, thou art a good lad." And so it was with all the men: if there was brisk demand they had their share, and if it was slack they never were the ones to murmur. In that way Robin would bring home, the wages of himself and the help the little ones would give him, from 30s. to 35s. per week.

Smith.—Well, but, Robin, what can they all earn now—five of them.

Robin (weeping).—Nowt now, maister Smith. Robin will never earn no more.

Quill.—Well but, Robin, I'm told that was his own fault—that he died from the effects of drink, a confirmed drunkard. Surely that wasn't the fault of machinery.

Robin.—Damned, it was machinery killed him.

Smith.—Why, how do you make that ont, Robin?

Robin.—Well, up to twenty-five years he worked at home, under my roof, and for that time no man ever see'd Robin the worse for drink. He'd rather make the week's wage more, and laugh when he'd tell Parson Flower, on Sunday, what he made for father and mother. But machinery took the

loom from Robin, and forced him into a damned "rattle-box," to work sixteen hours a day; and then at the end of the week, with fines, and batings, and reductions, he was brought down, and down, and down, in health, in body, and in spirits, with only sometimes 9s., sometimes 8s., and sometimes only 6s. 6d. a week, till at last he got ashamed of coming home at all. He got into company with others that were broken-hearted like himself; and he'd drink a day, and work a day, and play a day, till he broke his mother's heart. He died sure enough, but it was the damned "rattle-box" that killed my lad. I could well afford to make twelve pair of shoes a-year for my own family out of Robin's pay put along with theirs; but I lost that house-trade; and according as them there "rattle-boxes" came here, I lost all my old customers, one after the other, until at last them there cast-iron men of Maister Smith's, that works without shoes or stockings, e'cod, drove my old feet to these here clogs: for I couldn't afford to make shoes for myself.

Smith.—Come, come, Robin, you are going a little too fast. Surely there are more shoes sold in Devil's Dust now, fifty to one, than there were in your time. So somebody has got the trade!

Robin.—'Ecod, I wish them joy of it. Its like your ealico, Maister Smith: they are obliged to make them "cheap," to tempt folk to buy them. They make them by dozens, and paste and peg them together any how; and after all, "cheap" as they are, poor folk can't buy them. Well now, at the time that I speak of, it was a rare thing to see an idle man in the parish; and if wages were too low, why the old Poor Law came in and made it up: so that one could spend with another. I had a brother, a tailor, and he had his customers; and he would nearly guess what *his* wage would be every Saturday neet; for, somehow or other, the old Poor Law and the parish interest levelled those things all through. Well, in those days the working classes could support one another. They had a share of all that was going. They'd brew a bit, and give the cooper work. Young folk, when they went a courting, or company keeping, would have a watch. Then every man's house was well stocked with plenty of provisions. We'd have a bit of cutlery, and the cutler would have a pair of shoes. And we'd have a dresser, and delph-case with crockery; and meal-kest, and all other furniture fitting for poor folk.

Smith.—Well but, Robin, surely you can get all those things now for less than a third of their former price.

Robin.—'Ecod, I know it; *but I can't get the money to buy them*; and when I get them they're not worth a tenth part of the things that I gave more money for. So you see, Maister Smith, if you get machinery to do man's labour, the man won't be worth as much; he won't have as much to spend in the market. And now mark me; Richard Jackson tells me that if you and your men made a fair division of your profits for the last fifteen years, the men would have £34,000 more than they have got; and if they had *that*, they'd have better houses, the building of which would employ Stonemasons, and Bricklayers, and 'Tilers, and Plasterers, and Joiners, and Plumbers, and Painters, and Glaziers, and Labourers, and Nailmakers, and Brickmakers, and Quarrymen, and Limeburners, and Colliers, and Iron Miners, and Smelters, and, in short, doing every thing for the seventy families that Jackson tells me that you say your £80,000 spent in that way did so much good to. Now the people employed in all those works would be better customers to the Grocer, and the Tobacconist, and the Chandler, and the Shoemaker, and the Hatter, and the Tailor, and the Hosier, and all the rest of them: and then, if the seventy men—mind, only *your*

seventy, Maister Smith—and although they be but few, their ease applies to the whole system; well, if the whole of the poor devils who have been robbed of £500 a-piece had better houses, they'd have more furniture, a little education for their children, a few books, and so on: they'd be customers to one another; and, Maister Smith, its the pence of the many going through the hands of the many, and not the pounds of the few going into banks, and railways, and mortgages, and all those sort of speculations, that makes a full till and a cheerful face on a Saturday neet for the shop-keeper, and a good exchequer for the Government too. Now there isn't one of them there trades that I have mentioned as works by machinery, and they are one and all crying out and complaining.

Smith.—Pooh, pooh! They are always complaining—and they have nothing to complain of.

Robin.—E'cod, when men complain, and are able to give a £100,000 to relieve themselves, and able to pay (as they say) the national debt if they liked, poor folk needn't be blamed: for they wouldn't complain if they had'n't some reason.

Quill.—Well, and what is the reason, Robin?

Robin.—Why, machinery is the reason, Maister Quill—machinery that does the work of man, and eats nothing, and wears nothing, and uses nothing while it's at work, but a drop of oil.

Quill.—Well but, Robin, the landlords and the farmers, and the parsons, and the agricultural labourers, complain as well as you, and surely machinery doesn't affect them.

Robin.—By gow, but it does! Aye, and it will make them lads squeal out yet. Why, Maister Quill, if you reduce the value of labour you reduce the value of every thing—I beg pardon—*except the national debt and mortgages, and fixed salaries, and "dead weight" and pensioners*, Maister Quill. 'Ecod, these are like the leech; they'll fasten somewhere: and if machinery leaves nowt for them in the working-man's carcase, they'll fasten on to the landlords and the farmers, and the parson—aye, and on the Queen too, or on the devil himself, Maister Quill, before they'll go without. AS LONG AS THEY HAVE THE BAYONETS THEY'LL SCREW IT OUT, NO MATTER WHERE IT COMES FROM! So that you see, Maister Quill, rather than let folks starve, Sir Robert Peel was obliged to set his wits to work to see how he could get "cheap" provisions to square with the "cheap" wages; and the landlords are beginning to find out that the inanimate non-consuming producing power,—them there cast iron men, and wooden boys, and little wire girls, that Maister Smith is so fond of; they are beginning to find out that them there eats nothing; and that those whose work the cast iron men do, must get their food as "cheap" as possible. So the landlords and the parsons, that measured the value of their estates by the necessity of putting "Boney" and the "Jacobins" down, *must come down themselves in turn*. That puzzler, the great Wizard of the North, would be puzzled to pay the £50,000,000 a year, and all them there gambling debts and money owing to the Jews, *out of what machinery leaves to the working classes after living*. and, Maister Quill, the £50,000,000 a year must be paid. THAT MUN GO, IT MUN GO, Maister Quill; or thou, and them like thee—them folk that has got all the produce of labour,—MUN PAY IT. Aye, thou may look, and thou may laugh, and thou may wink at Maister Smith, but thou mun pay it, or the folk that gets it on quarter day mun do without it.

Quill.—No, Robin, I was only laughing at the idea of *my* being supported by labour, when I assure you, on my honour, I have never had a working-man in my office, except to do him a service, in the way of recom-

mending him to settle any dispute he might have with his master ; I never got a guinea from labour.

Robin.—The devil you didn't!

Quill.—No, not a farthing.

Robin.—And who are your customers, Maister Quill.

Quill.—Why landed proprietors, master manufacturers, and some of the parsons, Robin.

Robin.—Well, and how do the landlords pay you, Maister Quill.

Quill.—O, in money to be sure.

Robin.—Would ye take it in grass, Maister Quill.

Quill.—O, no, no, no. Not in grass—not in grass, Robin ; I am not a Nebuehadnezzar. I'll tell you what, Robin—if there was necessity fur it I'd take it in hay.

Robin.—'Ecod, that's *labour*, Maister Quill.

Quill.—Well, come, Robin, I'd take a good fat pig ; that's not labour surely.

Robin.—'Ecod then, it must be grass-bacon.

Quill.—Why, how ? what do you mean ?

Robin.—Why mustn't the pig have summat to eat, —meal, or barley, or 'taters, or summat of that sort ?

Quill.—Yes, to be sure, but then they can be bought.

Robin.—Aye ; but they must be *produced* before they are bought, Maister Quill.

Smith (aside to Quill). You'd better not go into detail. Keep him to the question of the improvement in Devil's Dust, and the increased wealth of the country.

Quill.—Well but, Robin ; to come from the 'taters to the public buildings and the present appearance of Devil's Dust, and the improvement in the condition of the working classes.

Robin.—O, very well. In the times that I speak of, every family was happy, and every man in the parish was known to one another. I had five children, all of different ages ; and although all, thank God, healthy—of different constitutions. The mother waterbed them ; and if they were careless about playing with other children, or if they did their work negligently, she'd give them their supper a bit earlier, and let them lie-a-bed a bit longer. All were treated according to their health and constitution. No scrambling for a candle then ; no rushing and erushing about the house when the big bell rung at five o'clock of a winter's morning, to rouse all folks, old and young, sick and well, weak and strong, to get up at the same minute. No running of the poor mother to the bed full of children, shaking all of them out of sleep, dealing the most tired a box on the ear, and a "damn thee, thou lazy baggage," or "thou skulking rascal ;" and then saluting the father and the husband with a "get up with thee, and be damned to thee ; doesn't ta hear t' factory bell ? Give me that there child ;" and then taking the child in her arms, "come here with thee, —take thy suck before I go—ay, what a bitch thou art ; this is three mornings I was five minutes late,—and fined threepence for thee." Then hurrying off, with the little suckling child, to the factory door, and the husband with a half-awake child upon his back to bring back the baby ; *she* goes to work, and *he* to the beer-shop all day, while Maister Smith's strangers is doing *his* work.

Smith.—O you exaggerate ; you talk nonsense.

Robin.—No, Maister Smith, I don't ! I see it every day of my life. Well then, I say, we had nowt of that sort when paid more money for every thing that we used, because they were good ; and when, after we had

paid more for every thing we wanted, we had more at the end of the week. In those times good character was the best fortune a poor man could have, and if a man or a lad in the whole parish was seen drunk, or did a bad thing, or said owt wrong of a neighbour, I'll warrant me he'd be marked, and he'd have a visit from Parson Flower. Sunday was a day of rest, and a welcome day. Folk would put on the best they had—good, decent warm covering, and go to the parish church with bible and prayer-book to thank God, and hear good old Parson Flower. When the parson came out of the pulpit, he'd shake hands with the old folk, and kindly inquire after them and their families. He was as keen as a shepherd: if he missed the littlest one of his flock that ought to be in the fold, he'd say, "Well, Robin, where's Will to-day; why wasn't he at church?" or "where's your dame, Robin?" And then I'd say, "Why, please you, parson, little Bill is but poorly, and mother set up with him last night." And then Parson Flower would say, "Ay, dearee me, dearee me; poor little Will—poor little Will; I must go and see him, and see what is the matter with him before I go to dinc with Farmer Jones." Well, Maister Quill, that's the way we lived when the row came down to Devil's Dust about "Boney and the Jacobins," and "Church and King," and the "Church in danger." Well, we met among ourselves, though we had no Town-hall then, Mr. Quill, and we heard what was wanted. Parson Flower and the Rev. Mr. Faithful came together to the churchyard, and they axed us if we "would defend our Church and our King." We had good wages, and we thought that the King had something to do with giving them; and Parson Flower, to us, represented the Church, and he was a good man; and we loved the little church where we used all to meet in on Sundays; and so we shouted "Hurrah for Church and King!" and "We'll fight, we'll fight and die for King George and Parson Flower." Word went off, and down came waggon loads of muskets, and swords, and pikes, and drill serjeants, to teach us how to shoot and stick the French. We gave a whole day in every week, and a bit of every day, to learn this new trade of butchering; but we minded nowt about it, but still pulled up the lost time by working later and earlier, and cheerfully; but, ecod, if we had known *what we were working for then, and how dear we've had to pay for it since*, much as we loved Parson Flower, we would have left *fighting* to King George and his soldiers.

Quill.—What, Robin, would'nt you fight now for the Queen and the Church?

Robin.—Fight for Queen and Church! Noa, noa, Maister Quill; you know better than that. The Queen? why, its *King* still, Maister Quill.

Quill.—King! King! what do you mean, Robin? I mean Queen Victoria and the Church.

Robin.—I mean, that *the Steam-engine is KING now!* and folk would'nt know which of the churches to fight for.

Quill.—Which of the churches? Why the right church—the Church of England to be sure.

Robin.—Maister Quill, its because so many says that this church is rect, and that church is rect; and because the Church of England hasn't done what's rect, that we hear of so many infidels that's gone away from all churches.

Quill.—What, Robin, are you an infidel?

Robin.—Noa, Maister Quill, but I'm going to show you how infidels are made. If I was a traveller, making my way to Devil's Dust, and if I came to a pass where there was another road, and if there was a finger-post saying—"this is the road to Devil's Dust," and "this is the road to

Shoddy Hall," I should be all reet then; but if I came on to forty or fifty different turns off the one road; and if there was a finger-post to every one, and if all said—"this is the road to Devil's Dust," then I should be regularly bewildered; I should'nt know which road to take, so I might get lost and go astray. And so it is with them there infidels. They hear all the parsons saying that this road, and that road, and t'other road is *the only road to heaven*, and like me, on the road to Devil's Dust, they get bewildered.

Quill.—Well but, Robin, suppose that arms were sent down now to fight for the Queen and the Church, do you mean to say that the people wouldn't take them?

Robin.—Noa, I say nowt at sort. They'd take them fast enough, *but they'd fight for GRUB and COTTAGE*, instead of Church and Queen. But, don't you fear, Maister Quill; Government will never try *that* scheme again. So now, you see, your fourteen churches are only wrong finger-posts, leading us all astray: your Town-hall is never open, except for the masters and free traders to put down wages, though we built it. Your banks are only to discount your paper simsies, your speculations on our labour; your rail-roads, steam-navigation, and all those things, are but machinery for cheapening our labour in all parts of the world; your hospitals and infirmaries are built for fear that your sort should take the infection from our sort, since you huddled scores of filthy starving paupers into garrets and cellars; and your big Bastile is a grinding machine to grind the faces of the poor, and to make them work for nowt rather than go into one of them; your Mechanics' Institute is only to enable you to fight "*genteel*" LABOUR *against poverty*; and your cemetery is your Free Trade burying-ground, by which you get as much as you can from poor folk when they are dead. It never will be looked on with the veneration, reverence, and respect, Maister Quill, that attaches to yon little old church-yard, where rich and poor lie buried together alongside, as they lived together, in harmony and fellowship. There used to be no doubly sanctified grave, here and there, railed in and beautified, making one man better than another. And as for that Parson Barebones, that has £2,000 a year for preaching sermons all about the "*improvidence*" of the poor, and for flattering up them that gives him good dinners, and all that sort of stuff,—ay, my God Almighty, when I sees him slapping through the street, not minding to ride over poor folk, and when I sees his wife and family turning up their noses when poor folk pass; and when I think of poor Parson F'lower upon £200 a year, praying for the poor, I no longer wonder that there should be a "*HIGH*" and a "*low*" church. I tell thee what, Maister Quill, if a rich man has a shepherd he'll run from his dinner or his bed if he hears there's a sheep on his back in a furrow; and the herdsman will sit up all night with a sick cow. We are told that Parson Barebones is *our* shepherd; and I should like to see *him* leave his bottle at the "*Squire's*," to take one of the poor flock of Devil's Dust off his back: or see him sitting up with one of his sick flock all neet. Maister Quill, when poor folk see more respect paid to the dumb animals of the rich than to the flesh and blood of beings with souls to save, they don't like it, maister Quill.

Smith.—Well now, Robin, it's my time—I must be off; and as you have appealed to me as one of the jury to decide between you and Mr. Quill, I think I shall convince you that I am neither prejudiced nor partial. I confess that I did think my friend Quill's arguments were unanswerable; but I also candidly confess that many of the points you have so shrewdly urged have presented a new view of the case to my mind, especially what you have stated as to the likelihood of the land being compelled to satisfy

those demands which have heretofore been supplied to the Government by labour : and now, Robin, as I have still a hankering after the old spot, if you will meet me here after the market on Tuesday next,—Mr. Quill and Jackson, I'm sure, will attend,—I'll have great pleasure in hearing the conclusion of your reply.

Robin.—Well, I'll meet you : I'm told thou'st purchased "Shoddy Hall" and the estate from Squire Gambler. E'cod, what "comes over the devil's back goes under his belly ;" and thou'lt find that the tax-sucking-folk will be after "Shoddy Hall" when the PANIC comes : and it's a-cooming !

Smith.—Well, well, Robin, don't suppose me so sordid as to have made the appointment from an interested motive ; but be punctual, and I'll attend.

Robin.—I'll be there ; and when I've done thou'lt hear Jackson about machinery, for I can only speak to one point.

Smith.—Yes, yes. I think it quite right to hear what every man has to say on his own behalf. It's what I should like to have myself. My motto has always been, "Do as you would be done by."

Jackson.—Then I am sure, Mr. Smith, as you'd like to get £500 from me, if I had it *of yours*, perhaps, according to your maxim, you will give me back *mine*.

Smith.—Good morning, Jackson. Good bye, Robin—shake hands : you are a wonderful man of your age. Come, Quill.

Robin.—E'cod, I remember when there were many men betwixt four and five score in the parish of Devil's Dust before machinery came here : but now a man of forty is almost a wonder. Good bye to ye.

PART III.

[According to appointment the four parties to the dialogue respecting the Employer and the Employed, met in the room of the "Stranger's Home" public-house, in the town of Devil's Dust, after the close of Tuesday's market ; and the dialogue was thus resumed]—

Robin.—Well, Maister Quill, is there owt strange since we met last ? E'cod, but Maister Smith looks ten years older.

Smith.—Aye, Robin, aye, I can feel for the woes of others.

Robin.—Why, what's up now ? Owt bad in the market ?

Smith.—Market, market ! It's anything but a market.

Robin.—Why, Maister Smith, what's the matter ?

Smith.—What's the matter ? Why, just as I predicted. They've overdone it.

Robin.—Overdone what, Maister Smith ?

Smith.—Why the China and India market. They are all glutted : the worst news that's come into Devil's Dust since the last panic.

Robin.—E'cod, but I thought there was summat gone wrong ; for all them there mills that was busy building a week ago, as folks said for the India and China market, are all give up : and there's a wonderful to do among the Bricklayers and Stone-masons, Carpenters and Joiners, and, in fact, all the trades. I don't go out to read the papers now, Maister Smith ; but Maister Sparerib, the butcher, came to me on Saturday neet, and axed how it was that so much meat was left on bis hands more than other weeks ? But

as he is a grumbling in the best of times, I didn't mind him much ; but he was lamenting over the case of poor folk, and saying as how them as would have a nice joint on Saturday neet, said they'd try a serag of mutton ; and others would take a lot of broken meat ; and them there as had a serag, would be content with a pluck ; and the good workmen that would have an extra joint, to feast their friends at Christmas, would wait for a week ; and so on. 'Eed, Maister Sparerib said he wished that sheep were all serags and plueks ; for folk wanted nowt else on Saturday. He axed me the reason, and I told him that it was all machinery—they there flying devils that folk with money was building palaces for—brought the Stone-masons and Bricklayers, and all the rest of them, Joiners, and Carpenters, and Nail-makers, flocking here, and Tailors to make eloths for them, while all the work was done afore they came ; while them warehouses and big pawnshops was full of as much as would fit the world : and so instead of nature we had everything fiction-like. And, 'eod, sure enough, but I hear Maister Squeezegut, overseer of that there fine refuge for the paupers, says that *he's* like to have custom enough ! for, 'eod, he hasn't house room for all that's applying for relief.

Smith.—Well, well, but Robin, how could *we* have foreseen all those things ? Don't you see there was a demand ; and shouldn't we, as a matter of course, and as good Christians, endeavour to supply the wants of others ?

Robin.—'Eod, Maister Smith, thou needn't look so blue about it. Thou'st quit Devil's Dust in good time.

Smith.—Confound it, Robin, "good time" do you call it ? Look here. Here's a notice I have just received of a public meeting of landed proprietors to be held in the Town Hall this evening, to take into consideration the best and speediest means of relieving the present distress of the working classes, by voluntary contributions, or such other means *as shall prevent an additional levy on landed property.*

Robin.—'Eod, Maister Smith, but that's just what I said ; and thou'lt find that "Shoddy Hall" will have to pay its share ! Maister Sparerib axed me to come and move an amendment for "protection for labour," as he says his eyes are opened to the infernal system, as he calls it, that wont allow hard-working folk to buy a bit of meat on Saturday neet. May be, Maister Quill, thou'lt second it.

Quill.—I tell you what, Robin, you may depend upon it that all those things are better left to the management of the monied classes. A good petition, founded on a sensible resolution, setting forth the prevailing distress, will have much more effect on the Government than all your ridiculous and absurd propositions about "protection for labour." Hasn't Mr Smith clearly pointed out to you that his situation is just as pitiable as yours ; and shown you that in the long run the grievance of the people must ultimately fall upon the shoulders of their superiors ?

Robin.—That's what I'm hearing every year. It's all alike : *until something pinches themselves, they care nowt far the condition of the working classes ;* and then when they meet, it's all to "PROTECT" themselves from the burthen ! But I'll tell thee what, Maister Quill ; who are they to petition ?

Quill.—Why, Sir Robert Peel and the House of Commons, to be sure.

Robin.—'Eod, but Peel and them folk will have enough to do to get taxes now ! and its hard to think that folk *that wouldn't hear poor people telling their own distress* will give owt for others to make a story for them ! Bless my life ; don't I remember what all them landlords and capitalists said when Maister Ferrand axed them for £1,000,000 for poor folk ? and, 'eod, £1,000,000 will be nowt amongst them all, shortly.

Quill.—Well but, Robin, the case is different when Mr. Ferrand asks for a grant of £1,000,000, and when the capitalists petition for relief.

Robin.—What's the difference, Maister Quill? Doesn't see that machinery has enabled its owners to collect most of the money in the country into their own bands? and, 'ecod, Peel has but to look out for the scrapings wherever he can catch them. Time was, Maister Quill, when Government had the cream and folks had the milk between them; but them there flying devils and cast-iron men have lapped up all the cream and left the Government only the skim milk, and the licking of the pan for poor folk. I'll tell you what, Maister Quill, you told me to look at all the churches, and all the improvements that machinery had made for Devil's Dust: and, 'ecod, when panic comes they'll none of them put a bit on the poor man's platter! Then where's all your great hoast about the "cheapness" produced by machinery?

Quill.—Well hut, surely, Robin, under any circumstances, it would be better to have things "cheap" than "dear?"

Robin.—Maister Quill, that's another piece of wisdom we have long heard of; and when *you* complains of demagogues and philosophers, and will hear nowt that they say, we must come to common sense, and common reason, and ask you what you mean by "cheap" and "dear?"

Quill.—Now, Robin, you speak like a man of sense.

Robin.—Wait till you hear what I've to say. Well then, I remembers eighty years. I remembers all the years that things were "dear," and all the years that things were "cheap." And, Maister Quill, in the "dear" years I could get the "dear" food, and "dear" cloth, and "dear" every thing, and have more money at the end of the week than I had when all things were "cheap." I remembers when the quatern loaf was two shillings in Devil's Dust; and, 'ecod, "dear" as it was, poor folk could have it. Now it's sixpence; and, 'ecod, it's a seramble, and a god-send to get it.

Quill.—How do you account for that, Robin?

Robin.—Aaccount for it? why can't thou account for it? Doesn't see that while every thing is being "cheapened," labour has been made *cheapest* of all; and, 'ecod, thou'st made it so cheap, that thou must give folk summat to eat to tempt 'em to take it loike. So thou giv'st their labour to foreigners to tempt them to take it at all.

Quill.—Well but, Robin, don't you see its not fair to ascribe all these evils to machinery? Machinery and its blessings are, as it were, but half developed. Restrictions, as I may say, of which those upon human food are the most barbarous, sit as an incubus, nay, press as a night-mare, on the breast of machinery, and withhold all those benefits, which would otherwise freely flow from it, from the working classes. Once unsackle industry and untrammel trade, by allowing the produce of English labour to be exchanged with those who would give us food in return, and then—

Robin.—Ecod, *and then we'd be worse off than ever!* What would'st 'ta call Free-trade, Maister Quill? Why, it's free enough to have turned the little village of Devil's Dust into a great city, to send two members to Parliament! And hasn't seen mill piled on mill, and house on house, one after 'tother; and hasn't every additional mill been a bit of "extension," as they call it? and don't I tell thee that every "extension" has been followed by a rednetion of wages? Well then, here's a question, Maister Quill: if the end of all them "extensions" has been a bigger reduction in wage, can'st tell me how much reduction the great "extension" of all would bring about? Why, Good God of heaven, just look at all them there Indians, and them there Chinese, that folk tell us is nigh hand one half the world; and see *how soon* them there flying devils has completed all

orders from those parts. Aye, aye, Maister Quill; you say trade with those who would give US food in return. Eeod, it's Mr. Smith and the cotton lords that would get the "food in return;" and, *if we may judge by the past*, we might see big warehouses full of wheat at one sided of the street, and warehouses full of cloth and calico at 'tother side and those that made the one that bought the other walking naked and hungry between both!

Smith.—Pooh, pooh, Robin; you talk nonsense. How is it possible that masters would be so dead to their own interest as not to exchange the wheat that they got in return for produce, for labour to produce more? Not but I admit, Robin, that you have considerably staggered my notion in favour of a free-trade in corn.

Robin.—Yea, Mr. Smith, you'd exchange it sure enough, but then you'd exchange all: you'd be *maister of the wage of labour and the price of wheat*; and you'd tell the labourer that competition compelled you to give his produce so "cheap," and competition for corn made you buy it so "dear," that you have to get Chambers, and Chadwick, and Muggeridge, and Jemmy Graham, and Johnny Russell, and that there damned ould foil, ould Brougham, and that there ould woman, Joey Hume, and Franky Place, with two or three doctors, to draw out a table with figures that would reach from here to York, shewing the amount of food that folk could live on and work, and how "*low living*" and "*frugality*" was good for health! and how good living led to dissipation and idleness, and brought bastards! We should have cart-loads of books, and waggon-loads of "reports" from committees of capitalists and commissioners of bankers and cotton lords!—new-fangled stuff, and coroners' inquests, telling us the length of poor folks' guts, and how much blud poor folk owt to have, and all kind of stuff, as if poor folk hadn't as many guts as rich folk, and wern't made like 'em! Why damn it, Maister Quill—

Quill.—Hold, hold, Robin; swearing is no argument.

Robin.—It's enough to make folks swear to see the way poor folk is talked about, and wrote about, and treated now-a-days; and to see Maister Smith and his sort, and thee and thy sort, supporting newspapers by advertising to get £4 or £3 per cent. for "thy" money, and covering the walls with speculations and prospectuses as to how thou might make more of it; and boasting that in ten years thou'st invested as much "brass" in one damned speculation and another as would pay the interest of the national debt; and then leaving poor folk to pay the debt after all! 'Eeod, Maister Quill, I tell thee what; thou may'st bring down all the books in thy shop and read them all, and thou'l't never convince the working people that the laws are just that allow thee and the capitalist to do these things, and leaves the poor to starve. And I'll tell thee more too; that whatever price free trade allows the master to purchase corn at, no law that thou can make will ever regulate the price of the loaf that comes on the poor man's table. And I tell thee more than that too, that landlords alone will have to pay taxes and the interest on the national debt, unless they look about.

Quill.—Aye, aye, that's it. The landlords are the men! *Have at THEM!* They must enable the working classes to live.

Robin.—Eeod, but not by "cheap" bread, though.

Quill.—What then, Robin?

Robin.—Why, *GOOD WAGE* to be sure Let them work on the land, and then they wont care what price bread is. They'll have it out of their own sweat—and "dearer" and better. They'll eat enough; and get more for surplus, and be good customers in the manufacturing market.

Quill.—What, Robin; then you are opposed to machinery altogether?

Robin.—Noa, nowt of the sort! I remembers reading after Cobden, when

he was at Bradford, and he axed a Hand-loom Weaver that opposed him if he was against machinery? The poor man's name was Butterworth, and his answer was: "Noa, Mr. Cobden; I am not opposed to machinery. You may go to bed by machinery, and get up by machinery, and eat by machinery, and drink by machinery, and put on your clothes by machinery; aye, pick your teeth by machinery; *if your machinery doesn't take my bed from under me, the coat off my back, and the loaf off my table.*" Ecod, but that was wisdom! It was worth all the tons of traets that ever was issued by that skin-flint of a League.

Quill.—Well bnt, Robin, why talk of tilling the land at home, when we can get corn so much "cheaper" from abroad? Besides, you know that the very best authorities tell us that the land of England does not produce, and indeed *is not capable* of producing, enough of corn for the people?

Robin.—There you go again, Maister Quill, with your "better to get 'cheap' corn from abroad, than grow it at home." I say that *the man that grows it at home will be able to have enough of it*, independent of all laws and restrictions; and he'll be a better customer in the market with his surplus, than all the Chinese and Indians and other folk in the world. And it's all gammon about England not being able to prodnee enough! Why, there's nearly twice as many folk now in England as there was sixty years ago; and there's just as much land as when we had only a half of the population; and *then* I remember, some folk would talk that foolish stuff, that England couldn't feed them all. But now we see this very year, that the same land is capable of supplying the whole population! Aye, Maister Quill, and if we had four times the population we have, we'd find that the land would produce six times as much as it does now.

Smith.—Well but, Robin, how would you make the land produce more? Surely men that expend their capital in land are more conversant with the subject than you are; and they make it produce as much as it can?

Robin.—Nay, nay, Maister Smith; let the population "*press* on the land;" then folk will begin to see that the land was of no value till labour was applied to it; and if labour was applied to it, thou would not find it so easy to make £90,000 of thy £20,000 in fifteen years, as thou did'st when thy cast-iron men and wooden women, and wire children, "*pressed* hardly on the means of subsisteneo."

Smith.—Well, Robin, you appear to wish to check honourable speculation altogether.

Robin.—Nay, Maister Smith, not so; but I'd stop that speculation that allows the few to put the money that belongs to all into their pockets, and compels the many to starve, or petition Parliament for relief; or to ax the Queen to write a begging letter to Parson Barebones to beg for charity to keep them alive that keeps her, and feed that German husband of her's, and all them young half-German princes and princesses. And now, Maister Quill, do'st think thy father ever remembers the time in Devil's Dust when maister and men wrought together, that maisters were buying land and spending in speculations; while the King was begging, and Parson Flower preaching charity sermons for poor folk? Aye, Maister Quill, we had no Town-Hall then, sure enough, because folk didn't want to do what Bess's old Poor Law did for them! And then thou talkest of "*dissipation*," and "*improvidenee*," and "*discontent*" of the working elasses. I'll tell thee what, Maister Quill: just thou get Peel and the Government to shunt up the gin palaces, public-houses, and beer-shops, and see where the National Debt will go to! and see where the sailors' pay, and the soldiers' pay, and the pensioners' pay; aye, 'ecod, and the Queen's pay, too, will come from! Why, bless my old life, talk of "*dissipation*!" don't I live down there in

West-street, between a man that sells penny publications that folk can only buy on Sunday, and a big public-house; and isn't my brain addled on Sunday neet with drunken folk in the public-house, while Maister Smith and the bench of magistrates fines the poor devil that sells penny tracts on Sunday, to try and get a living? Who makes them "dissipated," Maister Quill? Why its the Government that lives on them, and the maisters that encourage them; and I'll be bound for it, that before maelinery came to Devil's Dust, thy faither never saw "Jolly Sailors" open after nine o'clock on any neet in the week and never on Sunday. Nay, if poor old Maister Grudge, that kept it for fifty years, allowed a lad to drink, or a man to get drunk there, Bumble, the beadle, would be at him, and parson Flower would be about his ears. And then about the "discontent;" I've seen famine, or nearly like it; I've seen when thy faither and I were put to shifts to get a bit for the children; and we warn't "discontented" then; *for it was all famine alike*. It came from God, then, Maister Quill; *and it came on all without distinction*. King would come down something, and Duke come down something, and Lord of the Manor, and Squire; but no begging letters; no praying for the poor alone, *but praying to avert the famine from ALL*. And then parson Flower knew what every man in the parish had to spare. He was book-keeper, like; and many's the neet, Maister Quill, I, and my wife and children went to bed without supper; and we thanked God we had dinner, and we blest God, and blest the King, and blest parson Flower, and blest the laws too: we wern't "discontented" then, Maister Quill: but now I see poor folk working fourteen hours a day, skulking down the lanes w'out stockings, and lying a bed a Sundays, and cursing, and damning, and blaspheming at the laws that lets the rich grind the faces of the poor. *They sees one set of folk rich and happy, and with plenty every day in the year; in "good harvest," and "bad harvest; wi' "good trade" and "bad trade; AND THE FAMINE IS ALWAYS ON FOLK THAT MAK'S THEM RICH AND FAT*. So thou seest, Maister Quill, it would be a strange thing if poor folk were otherwise than "dissipated" and "discontented."

Quill.—Yes but, Robin, I tell you it's all a consequence of their "improvidence;" they might be better off.

Robin.—I'll try that with thee, Maister Quill. It's always very easy to lay the burden on poor folk's shoulders. "One man may steal a horse, while another must not look over the wall." And now, Maister Quill, just see here. I'll take poor folk, and thou shalt take rich folk; and let's see whether rich folk is so "provident" and "careful." Now, let's begin with a lump; *rich folk owe a national debt of near eight hundred millions of money!* The Queen, they say, is cutting down her establishment because she's in debt. Working folk had to pay the Duke of York's debts. The King of Belgium left poor folk to pay *his* debts. The Duke of D—— owes two millions. My God! and all the poor folk together only axed for half that to carry them over the bad season! Marquis of A—— owes a million and a half. Lord C—— owes two millions. The Lord of the Manor here has sold off "Shoddy Hall," and "Twist Castle," and a whole parish, to pay the interest of his debts. In short, they owes among them four thousand millions to the Jews; and then they talk of poor folk being "improvident!" 'Ecod, when they set about building a house they mortgage the walls to put the roof on! And then see how folk compound and begin again; *but poor folk mun always pay twenty shillings in the pound!* Now, Maister Quill, have I proved that folk were better off before machinery come to Devil's Dust? (*Loud shouts without.*)

Smith and Quill (*speaking together.*) What's that? What noise is

that? (Procession passes with bands and banners; on the first flag, "*Procession of the Unemployed.*")

Smith.—O! it's only a muster of the damned tag-rag-and-bob-tail Chartists.

Robin.—(Standing at the window.) 'Ecod, *all folks are Chartists when they are hungry*: but I see many a score, and many a hundred too, among them that never before was known as Chartists. (Shouts of, "To the Town-hall!" "Down with the Bastile!" "Bread or blood!")

Quill.—Do you hear that, Robin? They are calling for bread.

Robin.—Ay, but not for "cheap" bread, Maister Quill. See that there flag, "*Down with the League!*" See 'tother, "*More pigs and less parsons.*" 'Ecod, I hope Parson Barebones will see *that*. See here, Maister Smith, coom and look.

Smith.—Nay, Robin, I don't wish to be seen.

Robin.—'Ecod, but here! *here's all the men that's worked for thee passing now*: coom and see.

Smith.—No, thank ye, Robin; I'd rather not.

Robin.—Ah, there it is, Maister Quill; in them times, before machinery was here, *the maister was never ashamed or afraid to look his men in the face!*

Smith.—Aye, Robin; but it is the men that have grown "impatient" and insolent now-a-days. They can't have been hungry longer than since Saturday last, and they're crying out already.

Robin.—'Ecod, Maister Smith, in former times, if it were not a down-right famine, we could stand a quarter or more before we'd complain, because we had summat laid up; but now folk cry out when they are hungry, for hunger comes slap on them. They can't wait. See here, Maister Quill, "*Down with the bastile.*" "*Equal rights.*" "*Fair day's wage for a fair day's work.*" "*Annual Parliaments.*" "*Universal Suffrage.*" "*Vote by Ballot.*" "*Equal representation.*" "*No property qualification,*" and "*Payment of members.*"

"THE CHARTER IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT:—

"*We'll die or have it.*"

Smith.—Yes, yes; I was right, they're Chartists, never satisfied.

Robin.—'Ecod, then it was machinery that made them Chartists, as well as made the churches, the banks, and the bastile. (Shouts of "*To the Town Hall!*")

Smith.—Robin, will you accompany us?

Robin.—Thankee, Maister Smith, I'm over old to make my way through a crowd now; but you and Maister Quill can go down.

Quill.—No, I certainly shan't. I've nothing to do with it.

Smith.—I thought it was to be a meeting of landed proprietors and rate-payers?

Robin.—'Ecod, and so it is; the folks there ought to be the proprietors, as they are the rate-payers: so coom and hear what they have to say, Maister Smith.

Smith.—Come, then, Robin, if you'll go I'll go. Take my arm, Robin.

Robin.—Nay, 'Ecod. That would never do, Maister Smith, 'Ecod, they'd hiss me; or happen hustle me.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, give me your arm.

Jackson.—Thankee, sir; I'm too shabby. (*Quill bolts.*)

Smith.—Good God! am I to be left here alone? Jackson; my good friend, Jackson, you were always an honest man; will you stay and take care of me?

Jackson.—Yes, Mr. Smith, I'll stay and take care of ye. Now I trust that you'll see and understand that the working classes, howsoever oppressed, never cherish vengeance in their breasts, or withhold protection, when called for, even from those who oppress them.

Smith.—I thank you, Jackson. Do you think they'll come back? Do you think they saw me?

Robin.—Farewell, Maister Smith. A clear conscience is the best property that a man can possess, and the best safeguard against all the dangers that threaten. I have nowt to fear: so I'll go and face my townsmen. (Shouts without of "*Old Robin*," "*honest Robin*" "*three cheers for Robin*," "*take care of Robin*," "*don't press him*," "*carry him on your shoulders*," "*put Robin in a chair*," "*he's fittest to preside*," "*no cotton lord*," "*no Free Trader*," "*three cheers for Robin*,")

Jackson.—Mr. Smith, do you think old Robin would change places with you now, and take "*Shoddy Hall*" into the bargain?

PART IV.

Dialogue between Smith and Jackson resumed at "Shoddy Hall," by special desire of Mr. Smith.—Jackson is announced and shewn into Mr. Smith's study, at one end of which is suspended a map of Shoddy Hall, the property of J. Howard Percy Smith, Esq., and, over the chimney-piece at the other end, the armorial bearings of the Smiths, with a pedigree underneath, proving their descent from Belled Will Howard in the male, and Ann Percy, sixth cousin to the second Duke of Northumberland, in the female line.

Smith.—Have you wiped your shoes, Jackson?

Jackson.—Yes, sir, I have wiped them.

Smith.—O, that's right. This is a Turkey carpet; it cost me eighty guineas, and the least footmark discolours it.

Jackson (*aside, with a sigh*).—O, my £500!

Smith.—Now, Jackson, sit down, and let us hear what you have to say upon the subject of machinery, for, to tell you the truth, that old Robin has awakened such curious thoughts in my head, that I am staggered like upon the subject. He's an astonishing man for his age, that old Robin.

Jackson.—He is so, sir. But I am told he spoke like a lad at the meeting last night.

Smith.—Aye, by the bye, about the meeting; what was done there? Any resolution?

Jackson.—Yes, sir. Your cousin, Mr. Smith, the grocer—

Smith.—Pooh, pooh, that's all a mistake; he's no cousin of mine, Jackson—he's merely of the name, and there are so many Smiths, but very few from the old stock of the Howards and Percys.

Jackson.—O, I beg your pardon, sir. Smith, the grocer then, moved a resolution in favour of free trade, as the only means of averting the impending and existing distress of the country.

Smith.—Well, and was it carried?

Jackson.—No, sir; Samuel Bowyers, a shoemaker, moved an amendment. I have a copy of it here; I'll read it for you:—"Resolved, that we, the working classes and shopkeepers of the borough of Devil's Dust, in public meeting assembled, having long suffered the most galling privations, whilst all other classes are daily accumulating wealth from our industry, for which they find it difficult to procure an outlet, and believing the unrestricted use of machinery, as a substitute for manual labour, to have mainly led to this unjust inequality, whereby the employer becomes rich, as if by magic, in spite of opposing obstacles, whether they arise from natural or artificial causes—from bad harvests or fluctuations in trade, from a scarcity or an abundance of circulating medium in the country—while the condition of the employed becomes correspondingly deteriorated, good trade, plentiful harvests, and a surplus of the circulating medium having a tendency to increase rather than to diminish their poverty; and that in order to correct this unnatural state of things, this meeting is determined never to relax in its exertions until the people's Charter becomes the law, whereby the land of this country may, by a proper, just, and equitable distribution, be made subservient to the wants of society at large, instead of seeing it barren and unproductive, while those labourers who could make it rich and fertile are desired to look to other countries for a sufficiency of food, or to emigrate to foreign climes in search of the means of existence, which they are denied in the land of their birth."

Smith.—Good God, Jackson, who seconded that?

Jackson.—Mr. Sparerib, the butcher, sir.

Smith.—And was it carried?

Jackson.—Yes, sir. Old Robin tells me that only five hands, in a crowded Hall, were held up against it.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, what do they mean by the distribution of land? Do they mean to take it themselves, and pay no rent for it?

Jackson.—No, sir, they mean no such thing. What they mean is, that, having lost all controul over the labour market in its present artificial state, they are determined to have recourse to a more just system, whereby those who are displaced by machinery shall cease to be a competitive reserve for the masters to fall back upon, as a means of keeping down wages to the mere existence point.

Smith.—Well, but do you mean to say that all the machinery in the country is to be destroyed, or allowed to remain idle?

Jackson.—No, sir, I do not; but I mean that those who are not able to withstand that competitive system amongst the masters, in obedience to which you have before told me they must look to reduced wages to make up profit, and keep themselves safe even in bad times, may have some better channel open for their industry than that of "cracking" stones and picking oakum, in a prison dress, and under the eye of a hard-hearted gaoler!

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, what will become of the trade of the country? Where would the masters get hands?

Jackson.—In abundance, sir; but they should hire them in the cottage or the homestead, instead of in the cellar or the bastille. The people are beginning to think, sir, that the man gets a better price for his pig if the butcher comes to the sty to look after him than if he takes the pig to the butcher to buy him, because he is necessitated to sell it.

Smith.—Well but, now, Jackson, what has all this to do with the question of machinery? I am not so dogged in my own pre-conceived notions as not to be accessible to reason; neither have I been an inattentive listener in our previous discussions upon the subject; and if you have anything really to urge against machinery, and your reasoning is sound, I shall unhesitatingly confess my conversion.

Jackson.—Sir, independently of what Robin has already said upon the general topic, and apart from what I may yet say, you yourself have, though perhaps unconsciously, urged so many weighty arguments against it, that I think I shall only be called upon to furnish you with an analysis of your own reasoning to bring you to a different conclusion.

Smith.—What have I urged against machinery? Why I have been all along pleading for machinery, and arguing that the causes of its unjust unpopularity arise from the “improvidence,” “dissipation,” and “viciousness” of the working classes themselves.

Jackson.—That’s just the point, sir, and I am happy to have the admission; and I undertake to prove that what you call causes are effects: that is, that machinery is the cause, and “improvidence,” “dissipation,” “vice,” and “immorality,” are the effects.

Smith.—Jackson, let me repeat what I have previously said, and which I think embodies my opinions upon the general question; what I said was this:—

“The thing which governs them is the general supply of hands—the supply according to the demand. There is a certain quantity of work to be done here and elsewhere, and a certain quantity of hands to do it. If there be much work, and comparatively few hands, wages will rise; if little work, and an excess of hands, wages will fall. Without any mutual arrangement, the manufacturers come to an uniformity of wages. Indeed it is not the masters, but the labourers, who settle the rate of wages. They settle it by competing against each other. In the same way that manufacturers compete against one another, so do the labouring classes compete against one another. All find it necessary to work, in order to live; and to get work, they accept of what wages are to be had. If they, however, hear that higher wages are going elsewhere, they carry their labour thither. They there compete with those who are already settled, and perhaps bring down wages to a lower level. Thus, without any mutual understanding among either masters or men, but just by a universal competition, wages get settled down at particular rates.”

Jackson.—Very well, sir, I understand you perfectly. Your proposition involves three distinct considerations; namely, the governing power that you ascribe to machinery; the means of correcting the evil effects that you admit; and the result which must naturally flow from that correction. You must admit, sir, that when the population of a whole country becomes deficient in those moral excellencies which all nations, under good laws and fostering government, are capable of attaining, and when immorality becomes the rule, instead of the exception, of the national character (for you have been unreserved and sweeping in your strictures upon the working classes), I say in such case you must admit that there is a deep-seated evil resting somewhere; an evil which has originated with machinery, grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, this is all assertion.

Jackson.—It may be so, sir, but it is assertion founded upon your own admissions, and, as I shall prove, upon an incontrovertible basis. When you admit that masters’ profits, and their protection against fluctuations in trade, are made up by reductions in wages, and when machinery alone enables them to take this undue advantage of their hands, what other conclusion can be come to, than that the working classes should consider this governing power as their greatest enemy? And what more legitimate than that they should seek, by combination or otherwise, to destroy its effects; and what more natural than to seek another channel for their industry, over which the same anomalous power can have no controul?

Smith.—Jackson, I tell you that in the present depraved state of the working classes no controul or power can emanate from their body that must not have a prejudicial effect upon their order.

Jackson.—Mr. Smith, men are born with propensities, which may be

nourished into virtues or thwarted into vices, according to the training in infancy, the education in childhood, and the treatment practised towards them in manhood.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, that's the very thing that I complain of. Look at children now-a-days. The mother doesn't care for them. The father neglects them. They are wholly uneducated, and the gin-palace, the brothel, or the workhouse, is their first introduction into society.

Jackson.—I thank you for saying "now-a-days," because I am arguing that the governing powers, machinery the principal, are—"now-a-days" the cause of the social evils. And the fact that it was not so in England in olden times, when parents had the bringing up and controul of their families, is proof that some new agency has wrought the change. And now, sir, let me state my principal objections to the unrestricted use of machinery. First, it places man in an artificial state, over which the best workman, the wisest man and most moral person, has no controul. Secondly, while it leads to the almost certain fortune of those who have capital in sufficient amount to command those profits, made up, as you admit, by the reduction of wages; upon the other hand, it leads to uncertainty in the condition of the employed, against which he is incapable of contending. Thirdly, it disarranges all the social machinery of which formerly individuals were necessary items, families formed branches, and small rural districts important sections of the one great whole. Fourthly, the present fluctuations give rise, in good trade, to an augmentation of artificial classes, if I may so call them, who have no natural position in society, but are merely called into existence by present appearances, trade upon nothing, traffic in fiction, and, like your order, speculate upon what they may retire upon when trade begins to flag. Hence we find each fluctuation in trade followed by a new race of shopkeepers, who are grasping in prosperity, compound when appearances change, and retire when adversity comes, leaving a vacuum to be filled up by the next alternation from panic to speculation.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, surely you wouldn't put restraint upon any branch of commerce?

Jackson.—Yes, Mr. Smith, I certainly would impose some restraint upon that branch of commerce which enables masters to make up their losses in other speculations by a reduction of wages; and I would also apply some wholesome regulations to those speculations which deprive the infant of the mother's fostering care, and the child of proper education, by depriving the parents of the power of conferring both the one and the other.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, how does machinery deprive you of that power?

Jackson.—I'll tell you, sir. I have been working for you for fifteen years, and during that period I have been one-sixth of the whole time, or two years and a half, out of employment; while I have been compelled to submit to reduction after reduction, or to merge into the idle reserve. If there was a bad market or two in Devil's Dust, Squint, your overlooker, would come to us on Saturday night, and tell us how the mill must close, if we didn't consent to this reduction, and that reduction, and the other reduction. Sometimes it would be three per cent., sometimes four per cent., sometimes five per cent., and so on, till in '42 there was twelve per cent. These reductions would be always made upon the very first appearance of slackness, and then, when the India market and the China market were opened, and home trade became brisk, and we asked for an advance, we were told that since the first reduction the masters had been losing, and that we were only employed upon charity, and that losses for bad years must be pulled up out of the improvement. Well, we thought that, even if our produce was warehoused, our losses and reductions

should be made up as well as those of the masters ; and when we met Mr. Squint upon the subject, he told us that we might go to the devil, for Smith and Co. had got good men that wouldn't be always grumbling to do the work of a score ; that the machinery was all " double-decked," and that spindle after spindle was to be worked by " mules," and that the strong man that could do the work of two, with a boy to help him, would only be required to manage each, and that they would have to pay for the boy. Well, what could we do ? We had families and couldn't let them starve ; and so we were obliged to work on at any price that was offered ; and we were too poor to support the surplus created by machinery, and so, as you observe, they became a competitive power ; and when the good trade came again, there was the machinery already to work, with the least possible attendance, and then, when there would have been otherwise work for all to supply the temporary demand, machinery competed against us.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, I assure you, upon my word and honour, conscientiously, and as a country gentleman, that for some years previous to '42 the masters were losing.

Jackson.—Mr. Smith, I don't wish to contradict you, but I beg leave to differ with you upon the meaning of the term. If by losing, you mean that you couldn't calculate your profit so nicely after every market-day, I may agree with you ; but, taking things in the lump, I think present appearances fully justify me in coming to the conclusion that you have taken pretty good care of yourselves, and that you so managed matters, as, upon the balance of the whole account, not to be losers.

Smith.—Well but, Jackson, you must not argue the case from my position as an individual.

Jackson.—No, sir, I won't. I will argue it from the general condition of the master-class, and then what do I find ? Why, that immediately after confidence is restored, and trade becomes good, the masters are enabled to abstract nearly two hundred millions of money from trade, mind, from trade, Mr. Smith, still preserving stock and capital ; and to invest that sum in railroads, building, mining, purchase of land, and all sorts of other speculations.

Smith.—O but, Jackson, you are in error ! The masters alone have not been the parties who invested that amount in speculations. All other classes have had a share in them.

Jackson.—Pardon me, Mr. Smith, the labouring class, that created all, have had no share in them ; so that you see your bad markets led to reductions against which we couldn't contend, and improved machinery compelled us to submit to a continuance of those reductions when trade revived.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, I confess there's much sound reason in your arguments. I have known very many large masters whose dissipation and expensive families I thought must ruin them, and yet, wonderful to say, they have become rich. Yes, indeed, I am sure I have been often shocked when business has driven me to meet a customer at any of the hotels, to see the bar-parlour at all hours of the day and night filled with masters smoking cigars, and drinking glass after glass of brandy and water ; and as to Manchester, the dissipation there is beyond all conception.

Jackson.—Well, Mr. Smith, you see, then, that dissipation is not confined to the working classes, and that the dissipation of the masters neither reduces them to starvation nor prevents them from educating and providing for their families. So, sir, you must naturally suppose that some portion of the working classes would, if able, discharge their duties to their families. And just see how machinery precludes the possibility of it. You have said, sir, that women ought to be instructed in domestic pursuits. Indeed I think I can repeat your words ; they were very forcible, you said—

Along with this species of instruction, it would be of the utmost importance to teach females many useful arts; in particular those which bear on domestic economy—cookery, cleanliness, needlework, and the rearing of children. To bring up children with good habits is in itself a matter demanding the most careful attention of parents.

Now, sir, I fully agree with those sentiments; but give me leave to ask you how, under the present system, women can discharge those domestic functions? How can they possibly devote their whole day to unnatural toil in a cotton mill, and discharge their family duties?

Smith.—Jackson, that's wrong—it's very wrong. That's a thing that shouldn't be allowed.

Jackson.—No, sir, it should not be allowed; but then if you admit the value in after-life of early training under the mother's watchful eye, and if you deprive the rising offspring of that salutary protection, can you expect any other result than those abominations of which you complain, and which I deplore? And is it not machinery that drives man from the labour market, and enables the master to substitute the more pliant female, when she should be attending to those domestic pursuits? Is that, then, not a cause of dissipation, and is it not an effect also of machinery? Nay more, sir, you have condemned early marriages, but what can be more likely to lead to them than displacing man from his natural position and placing woman in his situation? If young men may be brought to philosophize upon the evils of early marriage, as you would wish them, you cannot bring young females, with hot blood in their veins, to calculate so nicely. And being made valuable in the market, may it not happen that their wage, rather than their affections, is the thing courted by the young man who has become a reluctant idler?

Smith.—Upon my word, Jackson, you astonish me! Do you know that I never gave those important subjects a thought before.

Jackson.—Well, sir, hence I shew you the impossibility of the mother discharging those duties required at her hands; and then see the injustice, nay, the palpable indecency, of compelling old and young, male and female, robust and weakly, to rise at the same hour, eat at the same hour, work nearly the same hours, and *only* the same hours allowed to all for rest. Now, sir, I am not an improvident man. No man ever saw me drunk. I was never absent when I could get a day's work. My wife worked in Grub's mill, and was obliged to pay a kind of step-nurse to take care of the children while she was at work, and I have never been able to keep her at home, never been able to spare wherewith to give my children education. Just as I often hoped to do a little for them, we have been obliged to try and live when we were idle, until we got employment again. And then, sir, nearly every working man in England lives from hand to mouth, and are thereby compelled to accept any terms that the masters choose to offer, and, as you see, the working classes are not now able to stand one week unemployed; and yet you wonder that hungry men, who are able and willing to work, should prefer looking for some general remedy for all those grievances to starving tamely while all above them have more than they know what to do with.

Smith.—Well, certainly, it is a most deplorable situation for the working classes to be in, but why not look for free trade as a remedy, and open the markets of the world to British industry? Just see what an impetus the free exportation of machinery has given to the mechanics' trade? And why not give all other manufactures an equal chance.

Jackson.—Free trade is moonshine! Mr. Smith. Open all the pores to-morrow, and by that day twelve-month machinery will have closed them, and have blocked up every available avenue. The free exportation of machinery is but burning the candle at both ends. The law which allows

free exportation of machinery is but young, and yet so great have been the improvements in manufacturing machinery by machinery; that the working mechanics are deprived of those advantages which would have otherwise flowed from the traffic. And you must also bear in mind, sir, that the extension of that trade is, day after day, limiting the great advantages which British manufacturers anticipate from free trade. Surely, sir, you cannot be ignorant of the progress that all the nations of the earth are making in the art, and England cannot suppose that those foreign capitalists will tamely submit to be ruined by cheap English produce. You must know full well that the same influences produced here by a class, will be put in operation by the same classes in other countries, and, further, that the influence of that class must be always greater in countries where land is cheap than where land is dear?

Smith.—Then, Jackson, you don't advocate a repeal of the Corn Laws? And do you know, that since I have had time to consider the subject, my opinions upon that head have undergone great alteration. What will be the effect of a repeal of the Corn Laws upon the land at home, Jackson?

Jackson.—Why, sir, a general stagnation of all pursuits. The landlords wouldn't reduce rents until it was too late. The farmers wouldn't employ labourers; and, as matter of course, the agricultural labourers would all flock to the manufacturing market. There would be a general scramble, and I think that, instead of shooting one another, or killing one another, the working classes, operatives, and agriculturists would level every mill in the country, and demand the land as the readiest means of subsistence.

Smith.—Good God, Jackson, is that really your opinion?

Jackson.—It is, sir, my confirmed opinion; for, talk as you may and reason as you will, you never can drive the belief out of the heads of the people, that that which does their work, while they are starving, is their greatest enemy; and you'll mark my words, sir, that before two years pass over your head, Sir Robert Peel will be compelled to tell the fund-holders that they must compound, because machinery consumes nothing, while he cannot reach the profits made of it by the few.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, I hope if that time ever does come, that the working classes will be forbearing, for certainly they have suffered great hardships.

Jackson.—Yes, sir, I'll warrant they'll never kill or shoot each other when that time comes.

Smith.—You see how necessary education would be, then, Jackson.

Jackson.—Yes, sir, and, while you talk of the want of it, and deplore the existence of immorality, isn't it shocking to contemplate that the English Church establishment, whose principal duty it is to inculcate morality and diffuse education, should receive annually the sum of £9,459,565, while the people are taunted with ignorance and immorality. It is not wonderful, sir, that the English people should be ignorant when their education costs annually less than the support and education of the Queen's horses!

Smith.—Jackson, I will once more repeat for you what I consider to be the main causes of distress:—

"I will speak candidly. I acknowledge, with great pain, there is a considerable amount of destitution demanding compassion and alleviation. By a concurrence of causes, general and particular, large numbers of the labouring population have got into a condition of considerable embarrassment and suffering—from want of education, abandonment to bad habits and loss of self-respect, perhaps natural incapacity to compete with more skilful neighbours, also by fluctuations constantly increasing the mass of destitution in our large towns. The misfortunes and imprudences of the higher order of workmen and the mercantile classes, also cause much destitution, and swell the numbers of the unemployed. It is very much owing to the efforts of this unemployed and half-famishing body of

individuals that wages are kept down or reduced. On the principle of "better half a loaf than no bread," they will gladly take something below the current rate of payment. Hence the vast crowds of poor needle-women who offer to make shirts at three-halfpence each, of lads clamouring to be employed as apprentices, of wandering paupers who are glad to work for the barest means of subsistence. You see *that it is the unemployed who determine the rate of wages*. Whether these unemployed be men dismissed in consequence of a slackness of trade, or be new hands, the same result follows."

Jackson.—Now, Mr. Smith, you have furnished me with a long list of those causes which you admit lead to destitution, and can you point out one single one that is not of an artificial nature, and created by an artificial system? You would enforce them as charges against the working classes, and denominate them causes; while I contend that they are grievances which they cannot resist, and are consequences of causes over which they have no controul at present. But, sir, as you have admitted that a dependent surplus, created either by bad trade or improved machinery, is the great power in the hands of the masters, and the greatest enemy of labour, I ask you, in fairness and reason, according to the laws of nature, and the rules that govern human transactions, even according to those self-protecting regulations by which the masters make themselves safe against all contingencies, is it not reasonable that the working classes should devote their undivided attention to the means by which this surplus may be so provided for as to be taken out of the hands of the masters?

Smith.—Well, Jackson, perhaps I may admit that, but then two questions arise—first, as to how the evil is to be met; and, secondly, if correction is practicable, by whom is it to be administered? for you know the old saying—

"Better keep the ills we have,
Than fly to those we know not of."

Jackson.—True, sir, but can you paint a hell blacker than the present, even as depicted by yourself; for you speak of men, whole classes indeed, receiving from £3 to £3 10s. a week, being dissipated and wholly abandoned to vice; indeed your words are—

So common, indeed, is it to see men with moderate wages saving, and men with large wages extravagant, that many persons have come to the conclusion that high wages prove a curse more than a blessing. The curse, however, is brought on the workmen entirely by themselves.

Now, sir, if I acquiesced in this sweeping charge, and absurd and ridiculous conclusion, that high wages was rather a curse than a blessing, we must infer as a matter of course, that is, if vice is not hereditary, and the exclusive patrimony of the working classes, that large fortunes also are a curse rather than a blessing, and your reasoning would fully justify a recourse to "equal distribution." Then, as to the evil, sir—you admit it; and that the people themselves are the only parties likely to correct it, must be inferred, for this grievance does not come into that category of evils to which you would apply any legal remedy; and, sir, to deal with this surplus, and to make it available to national purposes, instead of to the interests of masters, is now the grand and all absorbing consideration with the working classes themselves. And hence you find all those sectional and mere class questions, to which the consideration of the trades were confined, giving way to the more sweeping combination by which they hope unitedly to master the evil. The surplus of each craft is now pressing hardly upon the employed of its class; and the very moment that the privations of that surplus, becoming daily augmented, are insufferable, then, sir, will all the sections of labour combine in one general struggle against their oppressors. This is the great tendency of the age, sir; but the rules of your mill having denied me the right to confederate for protection of my labour, I am not acquainted with

the details of combination, the next branch of the subject to be argued—and as old Robin has been a leading man in all trades' movements, perhaps you will have no objection to hear what he has to say upon the general principle?

Smith.—No, upon my honour, Jackson, I have not the slightest objection to hear old Robin, for, as I said before, I think we ought to hear both sides of the question; and I really do see no good or sufficient reason why the working classes should not combine to keep up wages as well as the masters to keep up profits; especially when I remember reading in *Chambers' Journal*, of 1833, that it was the opinion of the Messrs. Chambers, "THAT IT WAS NOT ONLY THE INTEREST OF THE WORKING MEN TO COMBINE, BUT THAT IT IS A NATIONAL ADVANTAGE TO DO SO."

Jackson.—Good God, sir, you don't mean to say that those were Chambers' words?

Smith.—Yes, but indeed I do, for the conversation that I have had with you and old Robin led me to a closer investigation of those matters, and I have been since reading many admirable tracts in *Chambers' Journal* upon the rights of labour, and the duty of the working men to combine.

Jackson.—Well, sir, you do astonish me. But it's only another instance of the many enemies that the people have to contend with. They nourish many vipers in their breast to sting them, and, in spite of past warning, they still go on, giving power and influence to their greatest foes, and look coldly and suspiciously upon their best friends.

Smith.—Well, Jackson, I presume you have now closed your observations upon machinery, and I shall be glad to see Robin whenever the old man can toddle up to "Shoddy Hall," or I'll send my gig for him if he should think it too far to walk.

Jackson.—Thank you, sir. And now, as the thread of our dialogue has been somewhat broken, I beg to submit a summary of my objections to machinery. Firstly, the application of inanimate power to the production of the staple commodities of a country must inevitably depreciate the value of manual labour; and every depreciation of the value of man's labour in an equal degree lowers the working-man in the scale of society, as well as in his own esteem: thus making him a mere passive instrument, subservient to any laws that the money classes may choose to inflict, to any rules the owners may impose, and satisfied with a comparative state of existence. I object to machinery, because, without reference to the great questions of demand and supply, the masters can play with unconscious labour as they please, and always deal themselves the trumps. I object to machinery, because it may be multiplied to an extent whereby manual labour may be rendered altogether valueless. I object to machinery, because under its existing operation you admit the necessity of emigration, better ventilation, education, improved morality, manners, habits, and customs of the working classes, thereby showing that a state of recklessness, ignorance, want, and depravity exists; which, as I before said, you admit to be consequences of the present system. I object to machinery for this reason: Mr. Grab, in *Devil's Dust*, employs 4,000 hands, and in 1841, after two bad markets, he reduced the hands upon an average three shillings a week each; and he has come lower since. And now observe, sir, the reduction that this one master had the power to make, and that the hands had no power to resist, gave him an annual sum of £31,200, without reference to any other speculation; and for the three last years has given him £93,600—a sum out of which those from whom it was plundered might have lived comfortably through the present distress. All are alike; and if all do not employ 4,000 men, and cannot have an equal amount of profit upon individual fleehing, each set of hands has its tyrant to deal with, and equally suffers

from the infliction. I object to machinery from the injustice that it imposes, even upon you, sir, in your present state.

Smith.—Upon me, Jackson! How, how can machinery affect me now?

Jackson.—Why, sir, Grab, and the others that have squeezed the life's blood out of the poor, and that have coined infants' sweat and marrow into gold, now tell them to go to the land for support, and to look to the poor-rates for subsistence. I object to machinery, because it leads to commercial tariffs and regulations in all the countries of the world, which affect the price of my labour, and over which I have no control. I object to machinery, because, although it cheapens produce, it cheapens labour so much more, that I am less able with my earnings to buy the cheapened produce. I object to machinery, because, while each improvement diminishes the value of my labour, the national debt, for the payment of which that labour is pawned, increases in an inverse ratio; for every shilling taken off my wages I have two additional to pay in support of this burthen. I object to machinery, because it prostitutes man, and displaces him from that exalted situation which nature designed him to occupy. Instead of being the controller of his bonsebold, and the support of his wife and family, he is as lumber in the corner, dependent upon the labour of his wife. Instead of supporting his family when he's unemployed, the bit he eats from the scanty meal of the children is grudged him, and from despair he either betakes himself to dissipation, which prematurely hurries him to the grave, or, tired of existence, commits a crime to avoid the workhouse, which expatriates him from his country. I object to machinery, because it has made one of my children a dwarf and another a cripple. I object to machinery, because it subverts all the rules of nature and nature's God. With a seemingly and frugal life, the number of years promised to me is three-score and ten, and how old would you take me to be, Mr. Smith?

Smith.—Why, perhaps, turned of fifty, or handy on towards sixty. I'm fifty, myself, and you look some years older.

Jackson.—Ah, sir, I am not yet thirty-four. I commenced with you at nineteen; so you see, sir, what ravages that hard labour, which you tell me is nothing to the toil of fox-hunting, has made upon me; while all that "mental anxiety" of which you complain still leaves you the gait and appearance of manhood, aye, and even the blush of youth. I object to machinery, because overlookers render themselves the more acceptable to their employers by tyranny, coercion, lying, slander, hypocrisy, cruelty, "fines," "batings," stoppages, and plunder of every sort.

Smith.—Yes, yes, Jackson, I do remember, I well remember, that Squint was always the first to recommend a reduction, and always appeared most happy when the fines, and batements, and stoppages, were largest.

Jackson.—I object to machinery, because I find that each "extension" leads to increased reduction; and because the cheaper the produce of my own labour becomes, the more difficult I find it to purchase. I object to machinery, because I cannot calculate upon any certainty, even of existence, from day to day. I object to machinery, because, whilst in employment I may be induced to rent a house upon the supposition that that employment will continue, and because, while out of work, I am obliged to pay the same rent that I compounded to pay out of constant employment. I object to machinery, because it huddles thousands and tens of thousands into large and filthy towns and cities, where temptation is ever in the way of youth, and dissipation the only resource of the unwilling idler. I object to machinery because it has made character of no value; because I am surrounded by an unhealthy atmosphere; because I never see a green field, because I never

see a tree, or hear a bird singing on its branches. I object to machinery, because it compels me to live from hand to mouth, thought of preserving a wretched existence for another hour of misery absorbing all other considerations. I object to machinery, because, after a hard week's incessant toil, my poor wife is compelled to bustle her way through the market, thronged with slaves, to buy the refuse provisions that have been pawed through the day by her betters, who had the first of the market out of her sweat. I object to machinery, because, when my children have come home blistered and smarting from the stripes of the overlooker's knout, I have gnashed my teeth in spite, and cherished a father's revenge in my breast, while the dread of starvation baulked me of a righteous satisfaction. I object to machinery, because I would like to reverence and adore my God, to love my neighbour, to honour and obey the laws, and all who are appointed to execute them; but my ragged condition forbids me to enter the house of God; my neighbour sees in me a competitor in the labour market, and looks upon me as an enemy; the laws crush me, and those who are appointed to execute them, punish me if I complain. I object to machinery, because its never-varying motion, with which I am compelled to keep pace, enforces a monotony of labour destructive of strength, injurious to health, and blunting to the faculties of man. I object to machinery, because it is man's curse, while I would hail it as a blessing if it was made man's holiday, by lessening that toil for which it has become the substitute, without depriving me of the means of existence. I think, sir, I have now accounted for female ignorance of domestic duties; for the want of early training and after education; for dissipation, dissatisfaction, immorality, and discontent; for the existence of labour combinations; for early marriages; the necessity of emigration; better ventilation; poor-houses, increased poor-rates, increased police force, increased taxation, and increasing hostility between the classes that rule and riot, and those that are ruled and starve.

SMITH.—Upon my honour you have, Jackson, and you have placed the matter in a light that I never saw it in before. Good bye, Jackson. Perhaps this trifle may increase your Christmas cheer, and I shall expect to see you and Robin at twelve to-morrow.

JACKSON.—I thank you, sir, and we'll be with you. Good morning, sir.

PART V.

Old Robin and Richard Jackson visit Shoddy Hall, by special invitation, and are received by Mr. Smith in his study.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, I am glad to see you at Shoddy Hall. Sit down, you seem tired. I would willingly have sent the gig for you. How do you do, Jackson, sit down.

ROBIN.—Thank ye, Mr. Smith, I bee's a little stiffish. I haven't been as far as "COMMON" for now two-seore years. Aye, its more than that. Let me see. It was time when rich folk frightened poor folk out of their senses with "He's a cooming" and "They're a cooming."

SMITH.—Who is "he," and who are "they," Robin?

ROBIN.—Why, God bless thy life, don't thou know? Why, Boney and the French, to be sure. Well, that time when rich folk frightened poor folk and stole all the land. 'Ecod, much the same as mesmerised like, and

folk were expecting to be eat up every minute, but they let the Lords and Squires take the land, but 'ecod, they'll na give it back again. This was all common then, Mr. Smith. Common for poor folk y' Devil's Dust, to keep cow on; but 'ecod, Squire Gambler represent Riding then, and Billy Pitt was hard pushed to keep in, and Squire a good dodger, and folks say, that when minister axed Squire for vote, Squire axed minister for "common;" and 'ecod, sure enough, minister got vote, and Squire got common, and poor folk's cows got road, and poor folk got bag. But ay, Mr. Smith, it would take too long to tell thee all about the rows and riots about inclosure of common, so, as Richard Jackson tells me, that you and I bee's met to talk about "combination," and "trades unions," we'll have that first.

SMITH.—No, no, Robin. I'm master of my time, and if you and Jackson have nothing better to do, you'll stop and have a bit of dinner with me, and, upon my honour, I should like very much to hear all about the "common." Where was the common, Robin?

ROBIN.—Where was the "common!" Why, bless my life, here, here, Maister Smith, here, where thou callest "Shoddy Hall." Doesn't know "common." Why, I thought every child in Riding knew "common." All reet and left, up away to bastile and barracks was all common. And all folk in Devil's Dust would have a cow, or donkey, or horse on common, and they'd play cricket, and have running matches, and wrestling, and all sorts of games in summer time. Ay, bless my old limbs, I remember when lads and lasses would "loose" work in evening and meet at market-house to run up the common, 'ecod, but thou'd think that they were so many young stags, and old Squire would be at the top of the hill, laughing ready to crack his sides, and first lad as would put his hand on 'squire's right foot, he'd get a sixpence; and first lass as would put her hand on left foot, would get another sixpence; but 'ecod, now folk think it a great thing to purchase bit of park, to let folk walk in, after they stole all land that folk used to go to, and bad cows on. Bless my life, I never see such change, but I did stare this morning, when I see at one turn of common, "beware of dogs," then in another place, "man-traps and spring guns set here;" and then, "Any person trespassing on these premises will be prosecuted according to law." 'Ecod, trespassing on folks own land! and "combination" of 'dogs,' and "man-traps," and "spring guns," to frighten folk off—that's combination, Maister Smith, baint that combination, and weren't it combination of law and soldiers, and parson was sent down here just at that time, to preach up obedience to the laws that enclose common?

SMITH.—Well, Robin, but let us have common first, and combination after.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, thon shalt have both together. Combination inclosed common, and 'ecod, want of common made folks in Devil's Dust combine to see how they'd get substitute for loss of cow. And, I tell thee more, Maister Smith, if it weren't for damned soldiers, and parson Skinflint, they'd never inclosed common, for every stone they'd lay at night would be down before morning; and then they built barrack at one end and church at 'tother, and when masons wouldn't build wall, soldiers took to building, and parish were taxed for building barracks and paying soldiers, and score after score was hung and transported and imprisoned, and, at last, almost all folk had to sell cow, to pay Lawyer Grind, and Lawyer Squeeze, that come over from York, and settled here as soon as ever the row began, and 'ecod, they broke our hearts, and swallowed up cows and all, and now the son of one of 'em is mayor, and t'other owns all tolls of market, and is manager of bank. Aye, dearee me, many's the honest man was hung and transported over ould common.

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, just see the present fertile state of the old

common, compared with what it must have been when people turned out their cows indiscriminately to browse about—see now how much more it produces?

ROBIN.—Ecod, but who has it now, maister Smith—what satisfaction is it to poor folk to see fine field of corn that they can't touch, and to see green field with other folks cows, and big board telling them not to trespass.

SMITH.—Well now, Robin, I've heard all about the common, and let us have a word about "combination" and "trades' unions."

ROBIN.—Well, with all my heart, and thou'lt begin.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, my opinion of "combinations" and "trades' unions" is, firstly, that they are illegal, and always end disastrously for the working classes; secondly, that every failure places them more at the mercy of their masters; thirdly, that they force persons to remain idle who would be willing to work if they were allowed, and, now, if you'll give me leave, I'll read for you an article from Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, entitled "Strikes—their Statistics"—in which an account is given of the rise, progress, result, and melancholy consequences of two of the greatest strikes on record, that of the Preston spinners in 1836-37, and of the Glasgow cotton spinners in 1837.

ROBIN.—Thank ye, maister Smith, I've read it all.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, I am glad to hear it, and that will considerably limit my exposure of the evil consequences of "trades' unions," "combinations," and "strikes." Independently of my general objections before stated, I may urge that any attempt of the working classes to force up wages by strikes, or otherwise, has the inevitable tendency of setting masters upon the improvement of machinery, and the invention of new machines as a substitute for manual labour. I may instance the "self acting mule," invented in 1831, by Mr. Roberts of Manchester, of the firm of Sharp and Co., an invention which resulted from a strike that took place in Manchester in the same year. Another objection that I have to "strikes," as well as to all legal interference in questions of wages, is, that no parties can possibly be so good judges of what can be paid as those who have to pay them. Again, they lead to idleness and dissolute habits, which cannot be conquered or got rid of, even after the struggle has terminated. I have many more objections which I shall reserve, if those that I have already urged should fail to convince you of the impracticability, the folly, and indeed the wickedness, of endeavouring to fly in the face of those upon whom alone the working classes must depend for the means of existence. And even if my arguments should fail to convince you, I am strengthened, as well by the whole press of the country, I may say without a single exception, as by such patriots and philanthropists as the Messrs. Chambers of Edinburgh, and the great O'Connell, who have in the clearest manner exposed the injustice of combination, and in the boldest manner resisted its pernicious influence. Now, Robin, you see, I am opposed to combinations of all sorts, and what have you to say on their behalf.

ROBIN.—Nay, maister Smith, you are not opposed to all combinations.

SMITH.—Yea, but I am, Robin.

ROBIN.—Well now, maister Smith, I'll shew you that the only fair combination in the whole world is a combination of the working classes to keep up the price of their labour, and I'll show you more too, that if it warn't for all the illegal and cursed combinations of all other classes, sectionally and unitedly, to keep down wage, that there never would be such a thing heard of as a combination of the working classes to keep up wage. So you see, maister Smith, that, like everything else, they're first druve to do the deed, and then, 'ecod, they're lashed for doing it.

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, who drives them? what combination ever was there except the combination of workmen to keep up wages?

ROBIN.—What combination? Why combination of all devils in hell to keep down wage of poor folk, and keep up their own wage.

SMITH.—Well, but who are they, Robin?

ROBIN.—Who are they? Why just see here, maister Smith, what's all them there Kings of France, of Russia, of Prussia, of Saxony, and Belgium, and them there Garman Princes that swarms here like lice, and all as come over here to see our Queen? 'Ecod, its not for love of her, but to see how they can combine to keep wage up, by keeping poor folk wage down; what be they but combination? And then, what be all them there bishops and parsons, as eall themselves trustees for their successors, and as "can't take less" than such and such wage, because it's a duty they owe to them that come after them, to give them up all property unimpaired. What's them, and parsons that call themselves trustees, and suck blud out of poor folk, and swallow up all that's for poor folk to live upon, and take all that's to educate poor folk, and then call them lazy, ignorant barbarians. What's them there but combination of big devils to keep up their wage; what's house of Lords but combination of Landlords to keep up their wage, by making folk pay more for bread?

SMITH.—Ay, ay, Robin, there it is—that's the tax that presses upon you and upon us all.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, it's nowt of the sort—it's low wage, and too many looking for job that presses on us all; and folk taking and inclosing land that was intended for all. And, 'ecod, maister Smith, they didn't press hard on thee, for thou bought common with them round thy neck. Then there's Commons, what's them but combination? Then there's Ministers, Cabinet-ministers, what bee's them but combination? Then there bee's officers in the army and navy, and soldiers, and sailors, what be them but combination? Aye, 'ecod, and though thou sayest that law ean do nowt to keep up wage, see how it regulates wage of all them there. Aye, and how it regulates price of soldiers and sailors' food and clothing; aye, 'ecod, and gives them a retiring salary into the bargain, when they are too old for butchers. And then look at lawyers and barristers, bain't they combination? aye, 'ecod, there was poor Jem Staveley offered maister Swindle sovereign to defend him at sessions t'other day, and but he said he must have other shilling, as brother barrister would't dine wi' him or speak to him, if he wrought under price; what be that but combination, maister Smith? and mightn't barrister Swindle do poor folk job just as well for pound as guinea?

SMITH.—Well, Robin, that's very suspicious—that certatnly does look like combination.

ROBIN.—Well, there's maister Quill tells a story, mind, I don't believe it though, as how he sent in a bill of costs to maister Crust baker, and how maister Crust objected, and bow he sent it up to him they call taxing officer in London, and how he put £26 odd on to Mr. Quill's bill, because it was charged underrate like—baint that combination?

SMITH.—Well, go on, Robin.

ROBIN.—Well, see poor devil as kept Greyhound at Doneaster, and see how, when he put out the big board, telling folk that he'd post their earriages at 1s. 3d. a mile, instead of 1s. 6d., didn't all them innkeepers, all along line of road meet, and give orders to post-boys, not to drive folk, or stop, at Greyhound. And wasn't landlord broke, and sold up; and warn't that combination, Maister Smith?

SMITH.—Upon my honour, it looks very much like it, Robin.

ROBIN.—Then look at bankers of Devil's Dust, if "Union" charges five per cent. on bills, the "National," "the Provincial," "the Distriet," the "York County," and 'ecod, one and all, jump up, baint that combination? And then see masters of Devil's Dust, thou say'st they dont combine,

but all in themselves see how they can reduce wage, but then, if they can manage better, and to rob folk better, each for himself, what's thou call "quittance" papers and dismissals for looking crooked, or being of any political society but their own, and one branding poor fellow, and giving him good character like, wi' some damned private mark that's down agin him in every overseer's book, and when he goes for job—"Oh, the master gives thee good character, but there's no opening for thee,"—baint that the rascalliest and deceitfullest combination that man can think of? And baint it enough to force poor devil to take work at any wage, folk mun please to offer? Then see butchers, and bakers, and shopkeepers, and all folk—baint they combined? and then see here, Maister Smith, "competition" is a great word with thy order. Oh, thou sayest, wage must be regulated by competition.

SMITH.—Well, what fairer mode of regulating wage, Robin?

ROBIN.—Well, but baint it fair for all?

SMITH.—Yes, to be sure, and all do compete.

ROBIN.—Nay, nowt of sort. Its only the poor folk that's allowed to compete again each other. Why, God bless my life, look ye, Maister Swaddle has £500 a year for being clerk to Poor Law Guardians, and many's the better man 'y Devil's Dust that would be glad to take the job for a hundred. And then, look at Tory and Whig folk, when they're in, they'll give, God knows how much—£14,000 a year I'm told to Chaneellor, and £6,000 a year to Judge, and £2 and £3,000 a year to folk for doing nothing. And 'eod, if other folk were allowed to compete, all jobs would be done for less than half of what the law gives them. And yet, thou'lt say, that the law can't interfere to keep up wage. I'll tell thee, Maister Smith, if them there folk hadn't a slice of representation themselves, the law would let them compete to; so the law combines for them. So as poor folk havn't a slice of the representation themselves, they're obliged to combine agin law.

SMITH.—Well, upon my honor, Robin, upon the general principle of combination, you are most clear and lucid. I really never did see the question in the same light before. But then, Robin, how do you account in detail for the many failures, and the evil effects produced by those strikes originating from combination?

ROBIN.—Why, Maister Smith, there's the rub. 'Eod, the objection is not to the principle of strikes, the objection is to their failure. But is it wonderful, that combination of poor devils with all living on them, and watching of them, and ready to pounce on them, should fail, when they are opposed by all them theré combinations I've mentioned.

SMITH.—Well, really, Robin, 'pon my honour there's much in what you say. But now, to come closer to the question, what have you to offer in reply to the Messrs. Chambers' very clear and lucid illustration of the injustice of the strikes of Preston and Glasgow?

ROBIN.—Injustice, why, God bless my life, just take up that there rubbish of Chambers, and only see how every one line in it gives lee to t'other. Why, Mr. Smith, it's all a pack of stuff, paid for by maisters to make working folk thankful-like for what employers choose to give 'em, and timid-like in their own power to do owt for themselves. Why, what did spinners in Preston ax for, but same wage as men in Boulton hard by got for doing same work; and then doesn't that damned fool Chambers prove the maisters wrong and the men right?

SMITH.—How so, how so, Robin?

ROBIN.—How so! how so!! why, didn't maisters offer men ten per cent. increase, and yet it didn't come up to Boulton? So that, for years, these here maisters y' Preston, that talk of rising and falling wi' the times, were robbing the hands of sixteen per cent. Was'nt it time for poor folks to look

for justice for themselves? And 'ecod, Maister Smith, if trade get a fall, wage would go wi' it, and there it would stay; but when it got up, some maisters in other parts did put on a hit, hut Preston maisters kept on screw, and then Boulton maisters complained; and Ashton maisters complained, and maisters throughout complained, that they were giving higher wage than Preston maisters, that they couldnt compete with them: so that Preston folk were left to fight the battle alone. And the devil mend all the operatives of Lancashire for every reduction that come sin'; for, if they'd stood by the poor fellows in Preston, that they put in front of hattle, there would have been no more reductions. A few days out, and good cheer coming in, a little from all to keep the hearts up in the "turn outs,"—and 'ecod! labour would be conqueror. And that's the next twist workies will take; if they be wise, they'll "fight the battle," as old Duke would say, 'with small compact army, and they'll draw supplies from every quarter of the lahouring world.' Oh, my God of heaven, if poor folk would only be wise as their oppressors, and just manage tactics like them, and not all go scrambling every one for himself, and one bidding against the other;—aye, dearee mc, dearee me, if all folk, that never were in such good work, supported that there dare-devil, Lawyer Roberts, and his poor black colliers,—'ecod! we'd never hear of another strike. And see how them devils of maisters would cut maister Roberts' throat, because he'd fight the law again them. Aye, my God Almighty! if all trades in England would put themselves under that there chap, and just let the pride of England, our Yorkshire chap, that there greatest fellow that ever went into House for working men—young Duncombe, fight battle in the House, aye, my God, what a position they'd soon put trades in!

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, you're hlinking Preston and Glasgow?

ROBIN.—Nay, Mr. Smith, I shew thee that Preston men were reet, and had justice on their side, and the maisters were tyrants; and now I'll shew thee that maisters do combine as a body, and I'll prove it out of Chambers' own mouth. When the hands returned, 200 of the best men in the trade were refused work again, because they stood out like Britons; and all the maisters entered into a combination to refuse work to any of the hands that wouldn't pledge themselves never to belong to any union again—wasn't that a combination? And agin the laws, too, that sanction combination? And then, Maister Smith, tho' scores deed of starvation, and work-house was full, there was no violence: and a score of poor girls turned prostitutes, and now tell me who killed folk? Who made bad women of poor girls? And who rohbed the poor and the shopkeepers, and them that had to pay increased poor rates—who robbed them, I say, but the maisters? That proved that they were wrong, and the men reet, when they offered them an increase of 3s. 4d. a week to go back to work. And then, Maister Smith, you talk of the inventive genius of Mr. Roberts that forced him to make that there "self-acting mule;" and you'd make folk believe, that it was necessity that compelled the maisters to substitute that there thing for their labour. 'Ecod! you'd make angels of them, Maister Smith. But I tell thee, that if every man in England was at work for sixpence a day to-morrow, and no strikes or combinations, the inventive genius would still go on to see how poor devils could be made to work for fivepence. Nay, nay, Maister Smith, it's not necessity, its avarice and love of gain—one cutting against the other; and poor folk scrambling for owt they can get, that governs labour market. And now, Mr. Smith, docs think I have answered Maister Chambers upon Preston strike, and shown that maisters were wrong, and that they entered into combination when they got upper-hand of poor devils.

SMITH.—Why, upon my honour, Robin, you really have put a new construction upon it.

ROBIN.—Nay; nowt of the sort. I have taken Maister Chambers' own construction:

SMITH.—Well, Robn, what I mean is, that you have certainly put it in a new light to me; for, assuredly, you have convicted the masters and justified the men. And now, what have you to say in justification of the Glasgow cotton-spinners.

ROBIN.—Why, Maister Smith, if Preston men were reet, Glasgow folk were twice as reet; and now you shall hear why. 'Ecod! to read that there stuff of Chambers, onc would think that operatives could live like princes, and that they held out for seventeen week for wage that maisters couldn't afford to give.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, certainly that's the conclusion that any man must come to who reads Chambers' tract.

ROBIN.—Nay, but, Maister Smith, didst read trial and read case, put out by committee of Glasgow-spinners?

SMITH.—No, Robin. I certainly did not.

ROBIN.—Well then, Maister Smith, the Chambers say that spinners were earning 32s. a week, and men prove that they were only earning 18s. a week, and so far from strike being to keep up or get an advance of wage, the strike were to resist a reduction of 15 per cent., or near 3s. a week in wage: and when the hands offered to come back at the end of twelve days, even for the reduction of 15 per cent., maisters thought as they had them down, they'd trample upon them, and then they refused to take them back without a reduction of 35, 40, and even 50 per cent.; and hands said they would rather starve, and they were reet. And just see here, Maister Smith, mustn't maisters be wrong, when they thought 15 per cent was enough to take off at first; and then, in twelve days, when things hadn't altered, and when they thought they had poor devils down, they wanted to rob them of 20, 25, and 35 per cent. besides the 15. And then that there Sheriff Alison and his humbugging speech, that Chambers speaks of, what does it all shew?—but that starvation made folk wicked, and that he thinks that the bad trade and commercial panic, under which he says country were reeling, should be met by a reduction of wages. 'Ecod! Maister Smith, poor folk were reeling from panic as well as rich folk. And then see, after a long trial, what jury folks said—why seven out of fifteen said spinners were innocent; and eight in fifteen said they were guilty. But 'ecod! that there Chambers is worse nor whole fifteen—Judge and Sheriff Alison into the bargain. And no wonder that judge and sheriffs, and all press of country, and Chambers that writes—'ecod! for what he calls "the honourable aristocracy of labour;" and that there great O'Connell, 'ecod! the biggest enemy ever working-men saw in this world—

SMITH.—What! what do you mean, Robin? I mean the great Liberator.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, thou may call him what thou likest, but I call him the damnedest humbug that ever poor folk saw. 'Ecod, he'd put down Trades' Unions, that folk may send all brass into his purse. 'Ecod, he's no friend to owt that will teach folk how to do job for themselves.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, you really astonish me.

ROBIN.—Well, but Maister Smith, thou see'st now, that all them there newspaper fellows, and sheriffs, and judges, and Chambers, and that there O'Connell, that live by talking for middle classes, they must all back them, or they'll get sack. Bless my heart, they're just as much tools as my ould awl, aye, 'ecod, and like ould awl, they must work for maister.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, upon my honour, you have given me quite an insight into the feelings and opinions of the working classes; but I assure you, I thought that those men were your leaders.

ROBIN.—Leaders be damned. What we want is law to lead ourselves. And now, Maister Smith, I think I have settled question of Glasgow strike,

and now just see how I deal with thy objections. Thou say'st, that strikes always fail. 'Ecod, and so will an army without arms always fail against an army with arms; and then, thou sayest, that maisters are the only judges of wages that poor folk ought to get, as they pay them; 'ecod, Maister Smith, if thou go to shop and ax price of article, thou'lt get it as cheap as thou can, and if poor devil of shopkeeper is bard up for rent, be'll sell as cheap as he can. I tell you, Maister Smith, Scotch folks say "get a thing as cheap as thou can, and if thou can get it for nothing so much the better." Then, Maister Smith, what I say is, let maisters get labour as cheap as they can, but let them not rob poor folk, and make them so poor that, 'ecod, they must work for whatever maisters like to give, or dec of hunger, or go into the infernal bastile, and leave bome and family, and all. 'Ecod, old as I am, I would rather go to America to-morrow, than go into damned bastile, built where my cow used to graze. Look ye here, Maister Smith—damned! I see it from thy window. There, Maister Smith, close up by barrack, and look ye here t'other side, 'ecod the parish church. Oh my God, to think of soldiers and parson taking common, and poor folk put in bastile, built on their own land. Aye, my God, I must go, Maister Smith, I must go, I can't stand it. 'Ecod, but my old head reels when I think of olden times, when folk were cared for, because they were worth summat, but 'ecod, now when machinery does all folk's "work" nobody cares nowt about them. Now, Maister Smith, just see how system blunts all feeling. Eh, my God! just think of colliery explosion that blew up 95 poor honest hard-working folk; and, 'ecod, all brought in "accident" by damned Lawyer Coroner, and 'ecod, on evidence of chap what done it all. Eh, if 95 folk were killed 'y Devil's Dust in olden time—'ecod, but we'd have revolution, but now, ecod, it goes on like larning like; machine smashes lass's hand, then lass's leg, and then kills lass, aad, 'ecod, it makes a bit of fuss at first, then kills other and other, and so on; until, ecod! folk, like eels that be's used to skinning, get used to it. Until at last, 'ecod, it's part of the system—and maisters may murder folk, to warm other folk, 'ecod—ecod, but in ould times, when folk had heart and loved life,—'ecod, but friends and relations would maule coroner and overseer:—they'd call it murder, Maister Smith, but now, it's "accident," and man is "firebrand" and "demagogue" 'ecod, that says owt but it's all reet.

SMITH.—Well, stay, Robin, stay, I confess that you have good reason to feel excited, but let us prosecute our enquiry, and as the greatest things must have a beginning, perhaps your information may be the means of orginating that beginning, even upon the old common. Now, Robin, as to the question of law, how would you protect labour by law? Don't you think that that would be impossible?

ROBIN.—Yea, I do think that it would be impossible to expect that laws made by maister could protect labour for poor folk, that have nowt to do with laws but to obey them.

SMITH.—Well but, now, Robin, how could all the poor people possibly make laws, surely they cannot understand the complexity, the intricacies, and the niceties of law-making.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, they're too nice, intricate and complicated, but I'll tell thee what old John of Greenfield, Yorksbire prophet, said, when Milton axed him at nomination, "John," said t'old Lord, "Jobn," says he, "what's thou know about making laws." "Nowt," says John, "nowt about making shoes either; but I know when chap makes a pair that pinches my toes, and damned if be shall make any more for me." Now, that's just the thing, maister Smith. Poor folk isn't all going up to "Hoyle" to Lunnon to make laws, but they want to send chaps there that wont make laws to pinch their toes, as old prophet said. And 'ecod, if they do, the poor folk

tell them at end of year, when account comes in, to go about their business, as laws baint worth poor folk money, as they pinch poor folk toes.

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, what would you have the representatives do

ROBIN.—Why, Lord axed old John same question; he says, "John," says he, "what's thou know about making laws." "I know nowt," says John, "about making laws, but I know this, I know that all the stuff e' the world were made for all the folk e' the world, and I arn't my share of it, and I want laws to give me my share." Now, maister Smith, weren't that more sense than all Chambers' rubbish? and as working folk can't get their share without law, 'ecod, they must only combine together, and see if they can't change law; and keep up wage like by "trades unions," and "combinations," until they get law to do it for them.

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, now how could laws possibly interfere with the rate of wage?

ROBIN.—Eh, dearee me, what rubbish you do talk. Don't law interfere with every thing. Doesn't know that there was a time when king and parliament combined to keep up wage and keep down price of food. See here, see all acts of parliament I have here for seven hundred years gone. See here, when all kings, Edwards, Harrys, James, Richards, Old Bess, 'ecod, all had laws to keep down price of food and keep up price of wage. See here, Maister Smith, see old acts, commanding Justices of the peace, Sheriffs, and 'ecod, all officers of the county, to meet and declare the price of food, and to punish all as shall refuse to sell at the rate. 'Ecod, but I remember, aye, its four-score year now, sin' old Samuel Dodge was put in pillory, and what for, think, Mr. Smith?

SMITH.—Well, I really don't know, Robin, but it must be some dreadful crime, as the pillory was a degrading and shocking punishment.

ROBIN.—Eh, thou'rt right, Maister Smith. It were a dreadful crime. It were beginning of hard summer, and provisions were getting scarce; and Samuel goes out and buys 'taters, and corn, and things as was coming into market; and when market was opened, there was but little choice for poor folk that wanted to buy, as they were obliged to go to Samuel, as bought stock up. Well, Samuel thought to rise the price abit, and folk went for beadle, and beadle went for justice, and justice com'd down, and all poor folk flock around him, and I never see such a sight, and justice told beadle to bring Samuel before him, and 'ecod, he was put in the pillory, and justice ordered that all the stuff should be sold at the rated price. Now, Maister Smith, in them old times, the law called that "*Forestalling*," and it had a great deal about "*Engrossing*," "*Forestalling*," and "*Regrating*," and 'ecod, all them laws meant that folk should be punished, if they speculated in the price of poor folk's food; and what do you think, Maister Smith, 'ecod, for third offence it was death. Well, now just see here, now look down at big warehouses, full of wheat and oats, and folks starving, and owners buying and piling up, and 'ecod, trying to make a scarcity to get big price for loaf, and 'ecod, they are called "*anti-monopolists*." Why, good God of heaven, if Samuel Dodge deserved pillory, eighty years ago before common was stolen, and we hadn't one third of our present population to feed, 'ecod, every one of them there rascals with big corn stores, "*Regrating*," "*Engrossing*," and "*Forestalling*," poor folk food, should be sent to work in chain gang, 'ecod, instead of poor Frost, that felt for poor folk. Why, Maister Smith, ain't it a common thing now to hear men, them there patriot free-traders, them there chaps as is for cheap food, baint it a common thing to hear them in coffee-shop, aye, and in open street, to speak this way loike, "Well, maister Grudge, bad prospect of harvest this year, now's the time to buy wheat, its sure to be dear," and so with 'taters, and beasts, and flour, and 'ecod, if there's two or three cloudy days, but baker will put sixpence, or happen

ten-pence, a stone on to poor folk flour. Now, Maister Smith, in olden times, some of them there patriots would be put in pillory, and more on 'em would be hung; and 'eod, now them very ehaps does it in open day, and 'eod, axes folk to send them into parliament, 'eod, to keep down wage, and keep up pricc of food. 'Eod, but they call themselves poor folk best friends, while they've got, as old John would say, all the stuff of the country that belongs to all poor folk in the country. Now, Maister Smith, does'nt know, that in reign of Henry the 4th, when landlords were feeding sheep on land, beecause wool was very dear, and folk couldn't get food, 'eod, Hal come down to Parliament, and told Commons, how folk mnst be fed first, and Commons made law, that Squires and landlords shouldn't feed so many sheep, as "WOULD PRESS HARD UPON THE MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE;" baint that one of the free-trade gammons, Maister Smith, how population presses too hardly upon the means of subsistence?

SMITH.—Yes, Robin, certainly, that is one of their sayings, and don't you think there is much wisdom in it?

ROBIN.—Wisdom, yea, great wisdom, in making the philosophy first, and then giving it a good name. But, Maister Smith, was there much wisdom in taking three thousand aeres of "ould eommon" from all folk in parish, and giving it all to one man. 'Eod, Maister Smith, its the big man with big throat, that swallows up all, and not all poor folk that presses hardly "upon the means of subsistence."

SMITH.—Well but, Robin, just see what the wage of a working-man was in those times when the law proteeted it. We read of 4d. a day with food, and 5d. a day without food, and just see what a differencee now-a-days.

ROBIN.—Well now, Maister Smith, I'll taeckle thee upon that. A man would get 4d. a day and his food, good food for odd penny. Now, then, Maister Smith, that's a day's wage in olden time, feeding five able-bodied working men; and 'eod! I'd like to see the man now—single man, that could live, as folk did them times, and save four shillings out of every five of his wage. And 'eod! the four shillings saved, would do as much as four pound now. Now then, Maister Smith, there's differencee of time; and then see *that* were all done by combination. Look at all them there laws, and them there guilds, we read of in Lunnon—the Mereers' guild, the Tailors' guild, the Goldsmiths' guild, the Clothworkers' guild, the Saddlers' guild, and all them there guilds for regulating wages—for building alms-houses, and supporting folk—wasu't that combination? And now, eod! folk is obliged to combine to support one another when they are sick or out of work, and to bury one another when they are dead; aye, 'eod! they'll let poor folk combine fast enough when it's to sereew penec out of poor folk's selves, to do what law ought to do for them.

SMITH.—Well, upon my honour, Robin, there is certainly no resisting the overpowering strength of your arguments; but yet, see how different the appearanee of the working elasses and their mode of living is, when compared with their former eondition and habits.

ROBIN.—Former eondition and habits! Why, were didst learn that stuff?

SMITH.—Why, we read daily of the vast improvement made by the working elasses. I take my information from the newspaper press, and from the great improvements made in every direction — better clothing, better cottages, better furniture than they could possibly have in those barbarous times.

ROBIN.—Barbarous! you eall them! 'Eod! I'd combine to-morrow to make us all sueh barbarians again. I thought I'd hear summut of that sort, and I brought up with me what the King's Lord Chaneellor, Sir John Forteseue, wrote to King's son, in reign of Henry the 6th; and now, Maister Smith, here it is. Good authority, I think, coming from the King's

Lord Chancellor ; better nor all that rubbish in press, of middle folk and Chambers' tracts. The old English Chancellor says : — "The King cannot despoil the subject, without making ample satisfaction for the same ; he cannot by himself or his ministry, lay taxes, subsidies, or any imposition whatever, upon the subject ; HE CANNOT ALTER THE LAWS, OR MAKE NEW ONES, WITHOUT THE EXPRESS CONSENT OF THE WHOLE KINGDOM IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED : every inhabitant is at his liberty fully to use and enjoy whatever his farm produceth, the fruits of the earth, the increase of his flock, and the like : all the improvements he makes, whether by his own proper industry, or of those he retains in his service, are his own to use and enjoy, without the lett, interruption or denial of any. If he be in any wise injured, he shall have his amends and satisfaction against the party offending : HENCE it is, that the inhabitants of England are *rich in gold, silver*, and all the necessaries and conveniences of life. They *drink no water*, unless at certain times, upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are *fed in great abundance* with all sorts of *flesh and fish*, of which they have *plenty everywhere* ; they are clothed, throughout, in *good woolsens* ; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in *great store* ; they are also *well provided* with all sorts of *household goods*, and *necessary implements for husbandry* ; every one, according to his rank, hath *all things* which conduce to '*make life easy and happy*.'" And after this he observes, that these are the effects of laws, which are founded upon the principle, that "*a king is given for the sake of the kingdom, and not a kingdom for the sake of a king*.'" Now, what does say to that style of barbarism, Maister Smith ?

SMITH.—Well, upon my honour, Robin, I really don't know what to say. One hears and reads of so much stuff in Chambers' Journal and the newspapers, that I declare I thought the English were barbarians, and all prowling beggars and vagabonds, before the introduction of machinery.

ROBIN.—Introduction of the devil ! 'Ecod ! I'll tell thee then, Maister Smith, when I was born, that's now near band ninety years sin', King of England hadn't such a carpet as that, nor King of England badn't such cloth as thou hast now, nor such boots nor gold chain ; no, 'ecod ! nor such carriage or horses.

SMITH.—(smiling.)—Ah, ah, ah ! Why, perhaps not, Robin ; but see what a palace the Queen has got, and what furniture she has.

ROBIN.—Eh, 'ecod ! that's not the thing ; but featherbed and bedstead that old folk kept, and that I were born in, is the only good bit of furniture in my house now ; and 'ecod ! I can't live as well as faither, nor as well as I did before common was stole, nor as well as I did before machinery came up. Now, Maister Smith, I'll tell thee how things were with poor folk before they were compelled to live from hand to moutb, and when there were very little money in the country ; when faither deed, I were twenty-five year of age, and I got aere of land for nine sbilling a year. Well, I had grass of cow, and happen a heifer on common, if it weren't overstocked. And when I had work at my trade, I'd work ; and when trade was slack, I'd go in field and I'd work there : and eh, what a Devil's Dust it were then, compared to now. There weren't a better labourer in parish ; and when poor Robin grew up to be a lad, and after he had done schooling, mother bought loom for bim out of milk, butter and vegetables. Mother would say to Robin, "Now Robin, there's a good lad, finish thy task early, and thou mun go and settle garden with faither," or "Thou mun make hay or weed with faither ;" and eh, my God ! but the shuttle would fly like lightning, and Robin would whistle, and all young folk would set to reeling and winding to come out at same time wi' Robin. Oh ! but it was a beautiful sight to see poor folk coming out of a spring morning to see garden

after shower, and then to see them at three o'clock, when day's work were done inside, running like mad to the spade, and the hoe and the rake, and mother with baby in her arms, looking at father and children working, and all birds on wall in eaves, that would sing as if they thanked God. Aye, dearee me, how the rattle would go thro' village—that Will this, or Ben that, or Jack so and so, had first early lettuce, or first hunch of radishes, or first dish of 'taters. Eh, to see them looking at first dish, and then see flowers growing, and see all folk with nosegays, picking and choosing, to see what old Parson Flower liked best on Sundays. Eh, Maister Smith, instead of lashing the flesh off back of poor habies of nine years of age, mothers then need only say, "Now, Bess, if thou baint a good girl for the rest of the week, thou shan't have a nosegay for Parson Flower on Sunday;" and the child would be good, I'll warrant me. Well now, Maister Smith, want of votes to get money to keep French out, took common from me, and machinery took acre of land from me.

SMITH.—Machinery take the acre of land from you! Why, how did machinery do that?

ROBIN.—How did machinery do it? Why, God bless my life! when mill after mill were built, all the land in Devil's Dust were wanted for banks and churches, and police-barracks, and station-houses, and look-ups and warehouses, and lawyers' offices, and shops and cottages for poor devils to starve in; and 'ecod! down comes Lawyer Grind, and gives me notice to quit, and stieks up big bills all over my acre of ground that grand-father held, and father held, and I held under 'squire. But, 'ecod! Grind bought it, and then were all them bills with "this eligible plot of ground to be let or sold, for building on;" and 'ecod! all gardens in Devil's Dust, were all served alike—Lawyer Grind, and Lawyer Squeeze, and Lawyer Quill, and all the whole bunch of devils bundled poor folk out. And now, Maister Smith, there's pollee-harrack, hank, church, look-up, session-house, beer-shop, billiard-table, and hrothel, all standing on my acre of ground; and 'ecod! if Shoddy Hall, and them there buildings, don't press hard upon my means of subsistence, I wonder at it: and then who'll tell me that all the money that I hear of being in the country now, and that forces me to live from hand to mouth, is as good for me as "common" and "acre of ground?" Altho' rich folk like it best, 'cause poor folk can never learn the value of labour, when machinery does their work, and it allows rich folk to gamble in their labour, without knowing what profit is made of it. Does'nt that press harder on poor folk y' Devil's Dust than all corn-laws ever parliament made? 'Ecod! Maister Smith, but we have queer larning now-a-days. 'Ecod!! but they sell poor folk's land by yard to build on, and steal poor folk's common; then 'ecod! when they've took all, they tell us that poor folk's too many for land. 'Ecod! it's rich folk is too many for land; and they tell us to go all the way all over the world for produce of other folk's land. Now, Maister Smith, the more folk comes into the world, the more land they want; and 'ecod! the more they wanted, the more rent they must pay for it. So do you see, Maister Smith, somehow or another, poor folk be taxed when they come into the world, they be taxed all the days that they live in the world; and 'ecod! as old Jein Tot told Parson Barebones at vestry, t'other day, 'they be taxed going out of the world too.

SMITH.—How's that' Robin?

ROBIN.—Well, I'll tell you. Parson and Jim had some words over church-rates, and Jim says to parson, "Why," says he, "'ecod, that thou hast richest farm of ground y' Devil's Dust." "Why," says he, "parson," says ne, "there's acre in Cburch-yard, and there's four thousand eight hundred square yards in acre, and 'ecod, large and small, thou pack'st poor folks into about square yard, and makes them pay ten shilling for "Hoyle" and 'ecod, there's £2,400 an acre." "Pooh, poob," says the parson. "Gammon,"

says Jem, "you puts 'em two deep too; 'ecod, two crops like, and four if be." Now, baint that a tax, Maister Smith?

SMITH.—Yes, Robin; but then the working classes have burial societies though.

ROBIN.—Ayc, ayc, there it is, 'ecod, the law let them do that, and barrister 'ill certify that, and maisters will tell them it's all rect. Is that combination?

SMITH.—Well now, Robin, you are hinting a good deal about the land, but surcly you don't mean to turn poor operatives from the warm atmosphere of a cotton mill to work in the open air. I am sure, Robin, your heart's too tender for that; and then how could you expect them, some of them stricken in years, to learn the science of agriculture.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, but thou makest me laugh, maister Smith. Thou thought very little of turning poor folk from field and fresh air into hot oven, and 'ecod, there was no difficulty at all in the way of clodpoles learning new trade when maisters wanted them, but now, 'ecod, folks are thought to forget all about spade and land. Now just look here, maister Smith, if farming were to turn up best for making money, 'ecod, but we'd hear of nowt but the healthy labour of a farmer, the honorable oocupation of a farmer, and all newspapers would be crammed full of that like; but now, maister Smith, when rich folk can speculate on poor folk labour without land, and make 30 and 40 and 50 per cent. on it, then, 'ecod, you'd think that a spade was a mariner's compass, and that hoe and rake were like freemason's square and compass. Why, look here, maister Smith, it took me seven years to learn to make a pair of shoes, and I prick my finger wi' awl and hit thumb wi' hammer as often as leather, and burn my hands up when end would miss wax, and cut my hands when I'd be closing before I knew how to work elbow, and other man should cut out for me, but 'ecod, maister Smith, somehow or another natur seems to have cut man out for land, for 'ecod, the very first cabbage I ever stuek in ground, it grew just as well as if I'd sarved my apprenticeship. I'd go and see farmer Stretch a bit, and go and look at Squire's gardener, that used to come down 'y season and shew folk what to do, and then, in short time, when all folk 'v Devil's Dust do grow a bit for pot themselves, 'ecod, but there come six gardeners, and but they had all enough to do. I'd have one a day, and another would have one a day and so on; they were better combination nor lawyers, maister Smith.

SMITH.—Well, upon my honour, Robin, I believe you, and now, Robin, just a single word about early marriages, temperance, early education, a good system of emigration, better ventilation, and cheerful parks for the working class to exercise in, with mechanics' institutes as a mental resource, and, as cleanliness is next to godliness—baths for the working classes, versus the land and combination, and, upon my honour, Robin, I'll be bound by the conscieutious impression that your reasoning shall make upon my judgment, and now, Robin, be brief, and then we'll have a chop and glass of old English ale, and you must drink my toast, or I'll drink your's.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, that's fair, and spoke like a man, maister Smith, and I'll be short. Early marriages. Now, maister Smith, when I was a young man, old folk were always trying to marry young folk before they got too set like, so that they might grow up to one another's ways, and would luv one another, and help one another, and that would keep young folk out of harm's way, and make lads and lasses tasty like, and thrifty, lass would learn housekeeping, sewing, and cook a bit, and neighbours would all know it, for mother would tell it, and lad would be neet like in his dress, and work a bit extra to treat lass, and he'd learn to dance in evenings, and happen have watch, and bit o' trinket like; and then, young folk would grow up together, and children would grow up together, and married folk

would be sound and hearty to earn for children, not to work 'em too young; then, maister Smith, marriage state were a happy one, and, as Chambers says, *was* "a sacred and proper institution," but now, 'ecod, it's like cattle market; old men wheedle young lasses and marry to get their wage, and young lads marry old wives to get hit of brass, then, 'ecod, the old man's young wife, and the old wife's young hushand come together, and they make's what they calls a moral marriage, and see what a sacred and proper institution that is. See Queen, how folk praised her for marrying so young, and see how folk ring bells and pray, and thank God for all her "hairns." Maister Smith, believe me, that there's nowt like folk that's to live all their lives together, being welded while they're both hot; for 'ecod, thou'll see that a red iron and a cold bar wont unite, maister Smith.

SMITH.—Well, Rohin, we'll go on step by step, and, I candidly confess, that you have justified the early marriages, and now for temperance.

ROBIN.—Temperance. Give a man a comfortable home, maister Smith, let wife keep key of cock, and then sec how soon beer-shops and gin palaces will close shutters, and how folk 'll open their eyes and stare, and point finger, when they see a fuil drunk instead of working for HIMSELF, maister Smith, mind for HIMSELF.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, you have completely satisfied me upon that subject: and now for early education.

ROBIN.—Well, maister Smith, let folk marry when they are young, work for themselves, or, if they work for others, let their wage be regulated by what they could earn for themselves, and then folk would educate their own children. Aye, and take a pride in it too, maister Smith.

SMITH.—Capital, Robin, capital, you're a perfect philosopher, you haven't lived for nothing, Rohin, and now for emigration, are you friendly to that, Robin?

ROBIN.—Yea, maister Smith, that's the best scheme I hear yet, but 'ecod, I'd let parsons, hishops, lawyers, and all them there idlers go over and consecrate ground first; and then, 'ecod, when shepherds and wolves went, folk would be looking for more hands to come and till soil. Maister Smith, if I had my way, no man that could work, and was willing to work, should 'quit ould'spot as long as there was a hit of ground to be cultivated.

SMITH.—Well, upon my honour, Robin, I think I'm in favor of your cargo, but where would you send them to?

ROBIN.—Why, to hell, and give 'em Devil for pilot.

SMITH.—Ah! ah! ah! upon my honour, Robin, its only turn about, that's where they tell poor folk they'll all go. And now, Robin, what do you say to ventilation, haths, parks, and mechanics' institutes.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, I says gammon to all them; never you fear when man be paid for his labour but he'll have exercise enough, and he'll have good air too, and I'll warrant me he wont want water to wash, and he can make an institute of his own house.

SMITH.—Very good, very good, Robin, very good indeed, hut what do you want the land for? I have told you over and over again that it is not the price of commodities, hut the supply of hands that regulates wage.

ROBIN.—Well, maister Smith, now that's just coming to point, that's just whole question of combination. Trades enter into uoion and pays their subscriptions into fund, to support the trade when on strike, or to keep the surplus hands, rather than allow them to compete. Some keep them on tranip, some give them standing wage, some pay them so much a mile and bed and supper money, and so much a Sundays; now that's taxing poor honest folk that work, to pay hooest folk that can't get work, and the fund is to support the surplus when restriction fails to give all work. Well now, thou'st admitted that 50 haods in a thousand being idle will reduce wage of all thousand, and the trade that they belong to must either support them in idleness out of the "box," and they'll drink then, maister Smith, or, that channel of industry beioig closed against them, they must open another, and the only one they have capital for is the

land. And now, maister Smith, I'll make a sum for thee. Suppose 50 in the thousand to be out of work, and suppose ten shilling a week each satisfies them, and keeps them off competing with them at work; now, maister Smith, that's £25 a week, and that's £1300 a year going out of the "box," and if trade, instead of spending money in that fashion, took land for them and paid a good man to manage it for them he'd be worth his hire, it would pay the 50 thirty shilling a week each, and put thirty shilling a week for each into "box" as well. Now, maister Smith, that would be making £3900 a year, and giving folk thirty shilling a week instead of ten, instead of losing thirteen hundred a year, and only giving folk ten shilling a week to live upon.

SMITH.—What's that! What's that, Robin? Do you mean that only fifty in a thousand, or one in twenty, is to go on the land?—Merely those that can't get work at their own trade without reducing the wage of others by competition? Upon my honour, if that's what you mean, I know nothing that could be more just; but I always thought that the cry about the land meant the destruction of machinery, and a wholesale return to agricultural pursuits.

ROBIN.—E'cod; you'll always hear stuff enough about owt that's just to benefit poor folk; but that's just what I mean—I mean just what maisters mean. They want to open markets for their capital, and I want to open markets for the poor folk's labour. Let their markets be all over world in big ships, and let poor folks that can't skill all those questions, have market that'll fill belly at home, and clothe back, and lodge folk, and furnish house; and then, Maister Smith—'ecod! thou'lt find, when poor folk have land, that they'll bless the man that'll invent machines for digging and raking, and sowing and reaping, and planting; for then, Maister Smith, machinery would be man's holiday, and he'd love it: but now it's man's curse, and he hates it. Why, see here, Maister Smith, where's the use in nibbling and scraping with bits of old sayings, like "population presses too hardly on the means of subsistence," and "competition," and "buying in the cheapest, and selling in the dearest market," and the injustice of putting any restriction or interfering with the wage of working man. All such things is all gammon; for, in spite of all, we see the owners of machinery piling up millions day after day, in all seasons, all harvests, all fluctuations, in good and bad trade; while poor folk in Devil's Dust and elsewhere, baint able to stand out agin a single week's idleness. I'll tell thee, Maister Smith, when I see rich folk subscribe money to try the experiment of what labour on the land is worth—e'cod! I'll believe they're the poor man's friend. But when I see them doleing out charity and subscribing thousands for parks and baths and ventilation, and emigration, to keep idle folk quiet like, e'cod! that's all fear and no justice; and when I see rich folk combining to pay seven millions a year poor rates to support poor folk rather than spend a guinea in teaching them the value of their own labour, e'cod! then, Maister Smith, I think it's time that poor folk should combine to defend themselves. And as thou admits the surplus of hands is the thing that regulates price of wage, then I say that every man of every trade i' England should turn his mind to provide for the surplus; and I defy all the writers in the world to point out any other channel for the employment of the surplus but the land; and give poor folk land, Maister Smith, and then thou'lt have no poor rates to pay, then thou'lt have no police, no parish litigation, no strikes or turn-outs, no soldiers, in a short time, and thou'lt see whether Englishmen employed at home wouldn't be better customers to manufacturers at their own door, than them there Chinese and Indians, and South Americans, and all the rest of them. Maister Smith, there's more good than had in every man. The present system brings out the bad; let's try our hands at bringing out good, and then, here it is, Maister Smith, you see as long as Queen and rich folk live on dissipation, they'll never put it down: and as long as idle sons of rich folk can get job in army or navy, or police, or law courts, or church, e'cod! then'll always find ministers and their friends telling poor folk that their own depravity and immorality make all them like necessary. And now, Maister Smith, hast shown thee all about combination, and land, and free-trade, and what poor folk mean by protection for labour—by the law.

SMITH.—Why, Robin, not exactly the applicability of present laws to the settlement of wage; but I quite agree with you that God, in his wisdom, intended that there should be a sufficiency of food for all those he was pleased to bring into the world.

ROBIN.—Well, maister Smith, thou don't understand the meaning of the law, and I'll tell thee all about it in one word, but first I'll tell thee a story about a shoemaker that lived in Chester, and a bit of a spree he had with Bishop. Daniel, for that was chap's name, was working one day, when in comes bishop. "Well, Daniel," says bishop, "I hear thou hee's a great agitator." "I s'pose I be," says Daniel. "Well, Daniel," says bishop, "I hear that thou put's down all want and bad things happen to bad laws and aristocracy." "Thou hear'st reet enough," says Daniel. "Why, Daniel," says bishop, "does'nt know that all sufferiog of poor folk is curse of God for their sins and wickedness, and immorality." "Nowt the sort," says Daniel, "its all a damned lee." "Why, Daniel," says bishop, stamping, "does'nt know that God Almighty never sent a mouth into the world without sending enough to put into it." Well, maister Smith, now mind what Daniel said. Daniel heard that bishop was queer like, when he was at college, and used to be out at neet wi lasses, and bishop had no children, and Daniel was always a

regular hard working honest man, and he has ten children, and "Yea," says Daniel, putting down the "last" and looking in bishop's face, "yea," says he, "I know that as well as thou, but I'll tell thee where all the differ is." "Where," says hishop. "Here," says Dan, "God Almighty sent all mouths to my shop, and the Parliament all meat to thine." Eh, hishop ent.

SMITH.—(*Roaring with laughter.*) A capital answer, a capital answer, Robin. And now about law in one word, Robin?

ROBIN.—*Vote*, maister Smith. *Vote*, that's the ticket; and land's the soup, maister Smith. So vote and land be ticket for soup.

SMITH.—Give me your hand, Robin, give me your hand. You have hit the nail upon the head—I was wondering how you'd wind up your argument. Come now, Robin, fill to my toast, a bumper, Robin, a bumper of good old English ale, that every man that wishes ought to have at home. Come, Jackson, join us.

JACKSON.—Thank you, sir. I'm a teetotaller.

SMITH.—Come then, Robin, you and I for it. Here's that we may live to see the restoration of old English times, old English fare, old English holidays, and old English justice, and every man live by the sweat of his brow; when the goal was a terror to the wicked, instead of a refuge for the destitute, when her hardy honest peasantry were their country's pride, when the weaver worked at his own loom, and stretched his limbs in his own field, when the laws recognized the poor man's right to an abundance of every thing, when he was willing to work as the first "lien" upon the land of the country; and, as the corrupt votes of others conferred the people's land upon an idle aristocracy, may we soon see the day when an enfranchised community shall regain those rights and property of which they have been robbed by an idle usurping oligarchy. Come, Robin, three cheers, fill your glass and cheer.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, but I'll do that. Take off wig too. Here's to the aforesaid, and sooner the better.

JACKSON.—Hold, hold. My word, if I never took another drop, I'll pledge the Squire's toast.

ROBIN.—Eh, he's real Squire now.

SMITH.—Come, hands around. Here's to the aforesaid, and the vote to accomplish it.

ROBIN.—With three times three.

SMITH.—Nine times nine.

ROBIN and JACKSON.—With all my heart, with all my heart, and one cheer more.

SMITH.—Well now, Robin, there's no use in talking without acting, how much land would you say was enough to occupy a man's labour fully.

ROBIN.—Well, four acres is over much, but man could manage it.

SMITH.—Four acres! Well, Jackson, do you and every man that worked for me and can't get employment at their own job, and that wishes to go on the land, come up to-morrow, and upon my honor, I'll divide the sheep walk into farms of four acres each, and I'll try the experiment.

JACKSON.—Thank you, Sir, but we've no money to build cottages, or to live till crops come round.

SMITH.—Pooh, pooh, I'll do all that, and charge you a fair interest for the outlay.

JACKSON.—Only give us the cottage and land, sir, and charge what interest you please, and take my bead off my shoulders, if ever you are disappointed, when you call for the rent.

SMITH.—Well, come, now we'll have a chop; poor Robin is tired, I'll send him home in the gig, and I must go up to the sheep walk to make my arrangements.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, I'm not tired now, I'll walk home, and, 'ecod, I wont look so blue at ould common any more, though 'ecod, I can't forget cow when I had it for nowt.

SMITH.—Well, come, Robin, here's some satisfaction for you. Here goes all the League's tracts, and Chambers, and all the rest of the rubbish into the fire together.

ROBIN.—'Ecod, that will do, and now thou mun do what thou like wi' common. Good bye, Maister Smith. God of heaven bless thee. Come along, Jackson, strighten thy back, and hold up thy head, man, thou'll soon make another five hundred now.

SMITH.—Good bye, Robin, Good bye, Jackson; Robin, I mustn't forget you. You'll come and bring up your traps to the porter's lodge and you shall have acre for less than nine shillings and let Jackson and his friends "COMBINE" to till it for you.

ROBIN.—Thank ye, Maister Smith. Thank ye. 'Ecod, that's something like "COMBINATION," hut, thanking thee all the same, I'll live and de' in ould spot, where faithler and grandfaither lived and deed before me.

SMITH.—Well, Robin, if you prefer that I shan't interfere with your choice, but I'll take care that you shan't want for anything for the remaining years of your life.

ROBIN.—Eh, but I can say nowt. My ould heart's so full. God bless thee. God bless thee. God Almighty bless thee. Coome along, Jackson, or I shall make fool of oold eyes, 'ecod.

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